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## **The Makers' Tongue**

**Small stories of positioning and performance in the situated discourses of contemporary crafts practitioners**

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*Awarding institution:*  
King's College London

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**The Makers' Tongue: Small Stories of Positioning  
and Performance in the Situated Discourses of  
Contemporary Crafts Practitioners.**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of  
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### **Abstract.**

This thesis examines the situated language practices of a group of professional craftspeople. I proceed from a crafts literature whose orthodoxy is that craft practices and language are antithetical. My contribution to knowledge is to show that in contradistinction to the orthodoxy language is shown in this thesis to be a primary tool of meaning-making in the participants' working lives.

Data, as audio recordings and subsequent transcripts were drawn from a case study; a series of talks that ran concurrently with an exhibition of the key participants' work at a London gallery. The analysis pays close attention to the local, situated, talk-in-interaction of the exhibiting craftspeople and the other participants as they orient to a range of professional concerns.

I show how, as a particular field of the visual arts, craft has been shaped by its discourses, but argue that the local situated talk of the people that practise those crafts have rarely been attended to. Grounded in narrative methods and performance, the analysis reveals how talk as social practice enables the participants to position and categorise themselves and others in the local context as part of a wider landscape of professional roles and positions. The participants make available and work with locally-resonant concepts and meanings, mobilise reflective analysis and critique, negotiate membership, and exhibit affiliation to material resources, often by symbolic means. The participants' use of narrative in the data tends toward unrehearsed, fragmentary speech that emerges in the here-and-now as part of ongoing accounts of working lives, thus prompting an orientation to small story research. As both a method and critical position, a small stories perspective enables the revealing of under-reported and non-canonical spoken contributions. Such an approach supports an understanding of the concerns of craft practices. Meaning-making is thus seen as an emergent social practice distinct from the distant descriptions often offered by much of the canonical literature.

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## 1.0 Introduction.

In this thesis I examine talk amongst crafts practitioners in a professional setting and argue that talk is co-constitutive of artistic labour. Craft practice has canonically been partitioned from language in its literature (Dormer 1997, Adamson 2007, Sennett 2008,). It is a view largely predicated on craft practice being represented and defined as the skillful manipulation of tools and materials with the aim of making technically and aesthetically accomplished artefacts (Frayling 2011, Dormer 1994). In this thesis I resist such characterisations that 'craft knowledge' can be reductively ascribed to 'knowing how to make things'. The argument that craft knowledge is tacit is no more peculiar to craft than trying to represent propositionally the precision involved in any other spatio-temporally organised moment of simultaneous actions (Levinson 2003: 15), especially when compounded by lexical poverty in a particular field (see Harré et al 1999 for an example). Nonetheless, a condition has held sway where craft, and its practitioners, have had at the very least an uneasy relationship with language, (Harrod 1997, Johnson 1998).

The ways in which contemporary craft has been constituted, defined, and represented at an institutional level has brought focus on a particular type of craft object (Chapter 2, and below). This has tended to emphasise, on the one hand, an object's place in art-historical terms and lineages, and on the other, how and what it is made of. Craft, as an umbrella term covering a gamut of practices, is internally marked by materially-defined disciplines, such as ceramics, glass, textiles, and silversmithing. All of these disciplines to greater or lesser extents are maintained by, and themselves sustain their own specialist literatures and discourses. These can be seen as sub-sets, integrated within more general, encompassing discourses and literatures of craft.

But to focus on any attempt to turning making into language, is to miss out on what language *can do* in craft practice. The contribution to knowledge in this thesis is the adoption of language analysis approaches and narrative theory to the situated professional talk of crafts practitioners. My point of departure from the crafts literature is to resist such etic generalisations as "whatever clarifications of motivations and values the craftsperson achieves can be inferred from the work and what she or he does but cannot, with any depth, be put into words...almost nothing that is important about a craft can be put into words and propositions." (Dormer 1997: 219). Instead I adopt what might be seen, then, as

a wholly ironic or paradoxical stance and turn wholeheartedly to the words. I shift attention away from the stability of objects and material, to the ephemerality and transience, but also the specificity, of spoken language.

I am not seeking to exoticise these crafts practitioners by claiming that they have made a special or esoteric settlement with talk. Rather, I am drawing attention to the fact that, just as in any social interaction, they use talk to organise and realise their culture and practices (Coulon 1995, Burr 2003). The point of departure for examining talk are the craft discourses that partition craft practice from language. By some measure, it is craft's discourses that have gone some way to exoticise craft by maintaining its tacitness and otherness to language (Chapter 2).

Although sometimes described as socially distributed, thus implying networks of people, craft history and craft literature has paid much attention to the individual. This can be seen in the pre-eminence of the biographical 'big book' model of publishing. According to Greenhalgh (1997: x), biography is a vital component in establishing a canon: a view rooted in the art-historic tradition grounded in renaissance texts such as Vasari's *Lives of The Artists* (1565), and Cellini's autobiography (1550). The craft literature is thus well stocked with narratives, but these are well told, retrospective accounts of lives; big stories (Freeman 2007). I adopt a small stories perspective (Bamberg 2006, Georgakopoulou 2007) to reveal the often unreported, and consequently marginalised concerns of craft artists articulated in professional talk-in-interaction.

The title of this thesis references a particular exhibition of contemporary craft and makes an ironic play on craft literature's durational trope of tacit knowledge. The *Makers' Tongue* parallels the title of the 1981 exhibition *The Maker's Eye*, organised by the Crafts Council to mark their first decade. The exhibition title drew on the earlier exhibition "The Artist's Eye" curated by Howard Hodgkin (National Gallery, June – August 1979 (see Lees-Maffei & Sandino 2004 on craft titles mirroring art titles)). I interpret the exhibition title as putting to the fore the visual as central to a craftsperson's repertoire of aesthetic and critical skills as part of the sensory foundation of tacit knowledge; the setting apart of craft knowledge from language, a core topic of the crafts literature. It also refers to individual vision and judgement, at once reinforcing art history's normative concern toward the solo artist. The plural apostrophe of the thesis title is quite deliberate; I am referring to a group of makers and how they use language between them – their shared tongue. It is a deliberate reference to the data used

in the thesis as talk-in-interaction, language produced amongst others, acknowledging that much understanding is produced socially.

I use recognised language analysis methods: performance (Bauman & Briggs 1990), positioning theory (Davies & Harré 1990, Bamberg 1997), small story research (Bamberg 2006, Georgakopoulou 2007), and membership categorisation (Schegloff 2007, Housley & Fitzgerald 2015). These are tried and tested research instruments. However, for language analysis the subject in question, crafts practitioners' situated talk, is new.

Professional activities that might be considered comparable to craft practices are often researched from a multi-modal perspective, accounting for the co-implication of the 'tools of the trade' and communicative practices (Goodwin 1994, Heath & Luff 2007, Streeck, Goodwin, Le Baron 2014) but these studies embrace multi-modality in order to illustrate the necessity of objects (tools and materials) for theoretical work amongst practitioners to be done.

Talk-at-work as a formative force in community of practice (Wenger 1999) formation and, and hence identity and affiliation, is shown by Holmes and Woodham (2013) in building site apprenticeships. Launspach (2013, 2016) focusses on exemplar narratives as formative of affiliation and cohesion in textile practices. Mackivicky (2010) shows how talk underpins both tradition and innovation amongst lace-makers. Oak turns to a more wholly language-centred approach using small story research to examine talk in design student 'crits' (2004) and how it underpins the relationship between architects and clients (2009, 2013). The latter works focus on how participant roles are performed in interaction. As discussed in chapter two, where talk is examined in the crafts literature it is to point out language's shortcomings and deficiencies in practice to celebrate tacit knowledge (Martin 2016, Dormer 1994, 1997). Talk as data or critical resource is more frequently studied as per oral history (Turney 2013, Flegg 2013) or researcher elicited interviews (Bernabei 2011, Jeffri 1992). Accounts of cross-practice collaboration in the crafts (Revetz, Kettle, & Felcey 2013) do not account for local talk, and while making the case for local, socially-transmitted knowledge, Dormer makes no account of communicative practices (1994: 10-13). Thus far, talk in practice as contributory to the work of being a crafts professional has not been researched.



My key finding is that professionally-situated talk in practice affords social, professional, and creative accomplishments. This is in contradistinction to a crafts literature that has long held that craft practice and language are polarised. In this thesis I ask the following questions:

### **1.1.0 Research questions.**

- 1.1.1 How do small stories in interaction mobilise categorisation and positioning to enable cohesion and affiliation amongst participants?
- 1.1.2 How do symbolic language practices underpin positioning as creative professionals?
- 1.1.3 In what ways is the situatedness of talk co-constitutive of staging the professional self?
- 1.1.4 How do material and spatial resources shape the performance and production of the text?

Small stories of (often shared) lived experience can be shown to structure complex interactionally-accomplished local regimes of understanding. Locally situated, micro, socially constructed discourses can be seen to unsettle and disrupt some of the hegemonic and macro discourses of craft's literature and institutions. Work done with talk by these practitioners includes: identity constructions, made relevant to local and wider contexts; local understandings of particular words constructed in the ongoing flow of interactions (Chapter 4); working with small stories to exemplify arguments and as resources to tell-against-the-grain of orthodox behaviors (Chapter 5); using verbal structure to design the way talk is done to enable the situated performance(s) of the professional self (Chapter 6). And underpinning interactionally-achieved positioning work with indexical orientation to the material and spatial world (Chapter 7).

## **1.2 Outline of the chapter.**

In the remainder of this chapter I will firstly outline a working definition of contemporary craft. As a field within the visual arts, craft is characterised by ongoing anxieties concerning its identity. These themes are taken up in chapter two, but for now I acknowledge the fluidities of contemporary craft's boundaries but more usefully propose a definition to contextualise the thesis.

I then contextualise my motivations, outlining how my professional background and experiences led, over a number of years, to the undertaking of this research. The motivations are largely self-derived and consequently read autobiographically. However, the thesis is not 'about me' as such, but rather, I position myself as typifying a particular type of subject. The review of the crafts literature expands on and underpins this, but I am, to a greater or lesser extent, shaped by the UK art school system. I undertook a first degree in furniture design, I later set up my own studio before also returning to teach part-time at a number of art departments. I have since left those teaching posts, but like many others I blended making and exhibiting studio crafts with a career in teaching. A foot in two distinct yet entwined camps: the world of materials, tools, craft objects, business practices, and exhibiting, alongside a world that taught, discussed, critiqued, and theorised that world.

I will then introduce the data: where they were collected, what type of event was used, and the decision to use only audio recordings. The data are discussed fully in chapter three, where the data are contextualised by a short vignette; a "personalised account(s) of fleeting moments of fieldwork in dramatic form" (Van Maanen 1988: 136). I argue in chapter three that attending to the particular can instantiate a "telling case" (Mitchell 1987: 239).

I then go on to outline the structure of the thesis by briefly summarising each of the chapters.

## **1.3 A working definition of contemporary craft.**

A durational theme in the crafts literature has been the establishment of just what craft is. Frequently identified and located as a relational category to art and design (Harrod 1999, Adamson 2007, Collingwood 1938, Risatti 2007). Craft is also frequently cited as an approach or way of doing things (Sennett 2008, Crawford 2009), thus encompassing types of objects and philosophies of work.

Often predicated on a unifying notion of making something principally ‘by hand’, craft is thus located as something other than industrial production. This locates craft’s identity on a historio-technological continuum describing how artefacts were made prior to industrialisation. Craft nowadays, as a mode of production, is a choice. Despite its wide adoption as an identity category in craft’s discourses, a firm definition of ‘contemporary craft’ seems not to exist, thus perpetuating discussions of craft’s identity. Nonetheless, to situate the research, I adopt the term and I offer the following contrast: I start by placing contemporary craft in some sort of dependent opposition to traditional craft. All craft is about making at sub-industrial levels of production and almost always involves a high proportion of hand-work.

As diverse as crafts disciplines are, they are bound by a concern with materials as being part of their condition. While traditional and contemporary crafts typically recognise the centrality of making, materials, and technologies, a traditional craftsperson continues a particular vernacular legacy. They work within a tradition, more or less, replicating artefacts and processes. Traditional craft has come to be identified with rural crafts such as thatching, saddlery, and potting. This is not to argue that traditional crafts are predicated on unthinking repetition; innovation and change are as likely to happen in these fields, but it isn’t a motivating factor (see Marchand 2016). The conditions for the emergence of contemporary craft are discussed in chapter two. The result can be summarised as someone who questions a craft tradition and reflexively subverts or elaborates on it to produce ‘new’ work. Novelty and innovation are factors that manifest at a hugely magnified rate compared to traditional craft as the contemporary practitioner attempts to push the boundaries and expectations of a craft. Resultant artefacts often engage with ‘ideas’, sometimes at the expense of utility function. It can be argued that a contemporary craft practitioner co-exists with craft’s emerging discourses: as subjects they are aware of and dependent on surrounding critique and discussion.

#### **1.4 Motivation and personal context.**

The beginnings of this thesis are rooted in personal curiosity. I came to this research as a practicing professional designer and maker of ‘studio furniture’; one of a kind pieces, made to a large extent, by hand. Although I trained and qualified as a designer, what I made in my work was often categorised as ‘craft’. This has two implications: firstly, my professional position and subjectivity informs and shapes my research perspective; “My rendering draws on resources from my cultural context” (Riessman 1999: 10), and secondly, how what I, and others like me do, is named and categorised.

I set up a small studio and workshop in the early 1990s, designing and making furniture for clients, and also showing and selling speculative pieces in galleries and exhibitions. Naturally enough, I met people doing similar things, not just furniture makers, but ceramicists, jewellers, textile artists, and silversmiths, for example; people exhibiting and selling their work through the same network of galleries and shows. Along with talking with clients, gallery owners, and the occasional person who wrote about these things, I started to become interested in how what I, and these other people did, was discussed and written about. I became increasingly interested in the ideas, arguments, and concepts that lie behind and informed the idea of making things. Not just furniture, but what I came to realise was a discrete field called craft. How was craft explained, discussed, and theorised; how was craft and making things underpinned or co-constituted by ideas or philosophies?

These enquiries started before the ubiquitous ability of the world-wide-web to deliver up books from far-flung places or afford access to online texts. At the time I did not work in a university so had no access to journals, conferences, or art college libraries. Nonetheless, as a Londoner, I had easy access to the Charing Cross Road, so, in short, this research started in bookshops.

I soon exhausted what appeared to be available: David Pye; *The Nature of Art and Workmanship* (1968), *The Story of Craft* (Lucie-Smith 1981) and Peter Dormer’s *The Culture of Craft*, which was newly published, (1997), and every two months, *Crafts Magazine*. What appeared to dominate the shelves were histories of the Arts and Crafts Movement, biographies of ceramicists, photo-books of traditional country crafts, and by far the most numerous, ‘how to’ instructional texts.

This thesis is not an autobiography, but I would argue that my story of looking for things to read about what I do is emblematic. Put simply, for a curious crafts practitioner wanting to read about crafts and ideas, there appeared to be few texts available in the 1990s. I review the crafts literature in chapter two, the argument that I make goes some way to explaining the lack of reading available to me at that time: Put very briefly, prior to the 1990s there simply wasn't very much writing published explicitly about contemporary craft. In addition, what was being written was often by, and for, an academic audience, hence having limited circulation.

At the turn of the millennium I started working as a part-time lecturer on design courses in art departments in addition to working on my furniture. This gave me greater access to, and awareness of how the crafts were written about, and as importantly, a greater impetus to engage with other people about these things. To compound my own curiosity, I was also encouraged by others to 'get involved in research'.

Time working in an art and design department informed the literature review and affects and shapes my subject position. The key tropes that I go on to discuss, as aspects of a literature sustained by art-historical conventions, were of the crafts as a field anxious to substantiate its cultural position partly by 'turning making into writing'. This produced the apparent orthodoxy that framed craft practices, and language as distinct and antithetical (Chapter 2). As I show, the crafts literature had largely concerned itself with a particular type of craft *object* as a focus as it sought to delineate a new, contemporary, craft. My concern was rather more with the *doing* of craft; the ideas and knowledge that might underpin and co-inform making things. On these counts, much of the orthodox literature did little to satisfy my curiosity: it spoke of totemic artefacts as markers in art-history, and assigned 'making things' to a zone without language.

But part of my job was to teach people about making things, and I had, and continued to talk with other craftspeople and other colleagues about our professional concerns and interests. Language and interaction were part of my work life but not, apparently, an appropriate way to communicate craft practice. My curiosity was directed toward what the language I heard in my work life did (2.7).

The research meetings that I had started to go along to were as frequently about what form craft research should take as much as they were about research topics themselves. To try and unpack this a little: formalised academic research in the crafts is a recent phenomenon and there has been much debate in arts higher education about alternative forms of representation of arts research to the conventional thesis-based PhD. It seemed that discussion of practice-based research, practice-based PhDs and other pedagogic debates frequently overtook the topic of the research itself. Working in an art and design department, I did not want the form of my research to be more topical at these meetings than the content itself.

I wanted some critical distance between what I wanted to research, and the hegemonies and orthodoxies of its literature and discourses and sites. This could be better achieved by relocating myself outside of those discourses, and if wanting to ask what language does, then to more properly take up a languages perspective. To completely relocate contextually is unachievable. As someone who is formed by those discourses and has worked in them, I would always be aware of them and bring them along with me. The aim, however, was to make them less local in order to look at them from a greater distance; working in an art department meant being more or less surrounded by them. I therefore come to this research very much from the perspective of its subject, rather than from a background underpinned by language analysis and its attendant theoretical knowledge.

The researcher-practitioner situation that I found myself in resonates with the description of the variety of atypical ways by which people come to linguistic ethnography as an inclusive perspective by which to interrogate language and social life: “More motivated by interests generated by practical activity than by a fascination with academic theory per-se” in “an attempt to find a way of adequately rendering quite extensive personal experience...involving...frustration with the institutional processes in which people have found themselves living” (Rampton et al 2004: 12).

### **1.5 Data.**

Data were collected from five 'gallery conversations' (1.6). These ran concurrently with an exhibition of work made by a group of crafts people. The five events were audio recorded, and I discuss them more specifically in chapter 3. In the next section I introduce gallery conversations more generally as a type of event.

### **1.6 Gallery conversations as interactional events.**

In 2008 I became involved in an artist-led project with a small group of peers that was centred on communicativity and collaboration. The project resulted in the exhibition at which the data were recorded. The data were a type of event that I shall gloss as gallery conversations and discuss here. Gallery conversations are more or less routine aspects of gallery exhibitions, and to some extent form a common experience across a range of people involved in or interested in artistic practices. These particular events where the data were recorded varied from normative gallery conversations, and I will come to their specificities (Chapter 3). But first I will discuss them as generalisable phenomena, the aim being to unpack some of social complexities that lie below an apparently mundane surface.

Gallery conversations are rather tribal affairs. Ostensibly public events, they are populated by those with an interest or connection to the event. As a practitioner and researcher who is part of that tribe, working in those contexts I need to try to remove myself from the familiarity of those experiences to consider the strangeness of gallery conversations.

Occasioned as part of a temporary exhibition, gallery conversations are programmed to allow the exhibiting artist to present or discuss their work with a group of visitors. They frequently, though not exclusively happen in the hour or so prior to a 'private view'; the conventional term for a show's first night. Whether as part of a private view or not, a gallery conversation is most usually scheduled as an 'out of hours' event, i.e. in the early evening or on a Saturday. Gallery conversations take various forms but three common formats can be summarised thus: the individual artist alone talks about their work. Or the artist is joined by an interlocutor who might be a colleague, critic, or journalist, and the work is discussed. Or at some shows a panel might be convened and discuss the work's

themes from multiple perspectives. In all cases it is quite usual for questions and comments to be invited from the visitors following the initial talk.

In previously referring to tribal affairs, my intended effect was to highlight the convergence of subject positions that gather at gallery talks. That is to say, that despite talks being advertised and publicly accessible, their attendees are self-selecting and represent a coming together of close affiliations, not a microcosm of a general populace. All of these people have a connection to the artist, gallery, or exhibition, it is why they are there, but those connections operate through a variety of channels. There are a number of 'points of entry' into the discursive contexts that surround the event, and the diversity of subjectivities that are in play require interactional management in-the-now.

A gallery show is usually staged with joint expectations of good critical reception and commercial success. These two imperatives are not mutually exclusive, indeed they aid framing who might be at the event; potential customers and clients could have come by way of the artist, or of the gallery. Neither artist nor gallery might therefore know of that visitor's position. Equally, of course, it might be known to both. The implication of financial transaction does not necessarily imply overt formality: this is a world where relationships between clients, galleries, and artist can take years to build up and last for many years longer. Indeed, the idea of 'knowing the artist' can carry some social currency, and for the artist part of their marketing can turn on 'selling their story' (2.8). The exhibition might be the outcome of a funded project; representatives of the funding body might be present. The talk itself might be considered to be part of the broader dissemination of the project and therefore subject to some kind of accountability. Peers could be at the event, interested colleagues; fellow professional makers. The artist could be in a curious Janus-like position of welcoming people who taught her or him, as well as having students that they teach themselves come along. And there may well be educators from a variety of institutions, possibly joined by students. Sometimes family members will be present, from parents and partners to young children.

People who write about craft often attend gallery talks. Their writing can range from academic positions, to interiors and lifestyle magazines, to journalism. All are engaged with various overlapping aspects of circulating discourses with various readerships. All of these people are structured by, and in turn structure craft's discourses, they teach and write about crafts, and they buy and make



crafts. Seen from 'inside' the event, no matter how tribal, the participants represent a diverse range of subject positions relative to the artist, the work, other participants, and the circulating discourses. Embodying a graduation of embeddedness in what is going on, their diversity brings complexity to the interactional moment. The participants are individuals constituting a single audience. Strategies by which some of the key participants design their talk with regard to multiple audience subjectivities are analysed in chapter six.

I make a claim that my data were naturally-occurring talk and that the events might be described as convivial. To unpack these two points: firstly, naturally-occurring implies that the data, as a situated communicative event, were just 'out there' waiting to be harvested and analysed. But of course these events were occasioned by, and within, particular social and professional expediencies, they were part of the orthodox construct of 'gallery shows'. So, insofar as being natural talk, I argue that the data occurred through the normative practices and fabric of constructs in a professional craft practitioners' lifeworld. In short, this would be happening anyway. And secondly, although convivial, gallery talks are part of professional life, and as such, carry particular consequences, obligations, and expectations.

Gallery conversations are usually designed to be sociable; meeting and greeting gets done and visitors are often offered a glass of wine. But they are also framed by the social-professional expectations of such an event and the physical-professional context of the gallery. If the gathering is thought of, in Goffman's terms, a podium event (1981), the populating folk are either ratified participants or lecturers in a participation framework. As these events take place out of normal gallery hours, Goffman's notions of eavesdroppers and bystanders can reasonably be discounted. So, although convivial, they are not casual; pragmatic work is being done 'on both sides' (to use a coarse binary). The ratified participants have come to listen, gain knowledge of the work, and maybe to raise questions about it. And the exhibiting artist(s) has a requirement to represent themselves and their work in an appropriate way.

By performing these roles the artist is to some extent exposing themselves and there is potential risk to professional face. A visitor could take exception to the work or ask an awkward question: "they have the right to examine the speaker directly, with an openness that might be offensive in conversation" (Goffman 1981: 138). And indeed, for a ratified participant, if an aspirant of some type,

maybe a student or an enthusiastic amateur, framing and asking a question can be an intimidating affair. Seen this way, the events are low key, but equally, high stakes affairs. The artist is performing their professional self.

So, although I claim the events were convivial, the way that they are defined by expectations, obligations, and conventions implies some measure of formality and marks them out as a genre: “A distinct set of conventionalised expectations about a recognisable type of activity that is also often named” (Rampton, Maybin, & Roberts 2015: 26). Genre might suggest structural precepts but Rampton et al note that as the smallest and most available building blocks of institutions, they are also a site of moment-to-moment agency. As a practice, a genre is performed and “cannot be viewed as a finished product unto itself, but remains partial and transitional...Because they are at least partly created in their enactment,...genres are schematic and incomplete resources on which speakers necessarily improvise in practice” (Hanks 1987: 681, 687 in Rampton et al 2015: 27). An interactional, practice-based view of genres is consistent with the methodological framework established in chapter three.

### **1.7 Outline of the thesis.**

I proceed from a review of the crafts literature; this sets up and contextualises my critical point of departure for the thesis. I make two key arguments: firstly, that contemporary craft is a discursive construct, and secondly, that in the literature, craft practices have become partitioned from language. These critiques validate my appeal to attend to the small stories (Bamberg 2006, Georgakopoulou 2007) of language in practice. In chapter two I take literature to mean ‘discourses’ as texts that structure culture (for example, Gee 1990). In this way the argument is extended from the books and texts that commentate on craft to the texts that shape what craft is at an institutional level.

Contemporary craft did not exist, a priori, ‘out there’ ready and waiting to be written about. It can be shown to be an ongoing product of UK government policy starting in the 1940s that came to generate a literature over the ensuing decades. I argue that the topics that have been addressed in the craft literature form a mesh of hegemonic narratives (Giroux et al 1996) that have delineated craft but also restricted other forms of linguistic representation and presented a narrow view of what language can do.

In chapter three I work through a range of theoretical approaches that, in sum, establish an emic orientation to the data in order to question the etic, essentialising typifications upheld in the crafts literature. I use performance, narratives-in-interaction, positioning, and categorisation as a more-or-less integrated analytical approach.

The participants are staging their professional selves as part of a genre that is contingent and processual. I therefore proceed from performance in the linguistic anthropology sense (Baumann & Briggs 1990, Duranti 1997). The participants tend toward narrative forms in accounting for their craft practices. Narrative offers a formulation for accounting to the world as an alternative to the logical abstractions of the craft literature (Bruner 1986). These are not fully formed, well-told stories, rather fragmented moments told as part of interactional accomplishments. Narrative theory is thus discussed under the terms of what Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou refer to as a third type of narrative; co-constructed narrative-in-interaction (2008: 5-6, and see De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: 44) . Small story research (Bamberg 2006, Georgakopoulou 2007), as a literal response to the smallness of the narrative data, also enables a critical analysis of local talk marginalised from the canonical discourse. Within the ongoing narrative interactions, participants position (Davies & Harré 1990) themselves and others, working with categorisation devices (Schegloff 2007) to explicitly label themselves and others but also with other implicit, symbolic means. Positioning within narrative (Bamberg 1997) brings focus to the nuanced and artful ways that the participants manage their professional selves in situated discourse.

There are four analytical chapters, starting with chapter four.

Chapter four is in two parts, both of which orient to an emic perspective to show how the participants use language as a local interactional resource to establish understanding and aspects of their professional world. The first section shows how positioning (Davies & Harré 1990) as an interactional accomplishment affords the participants the ability to locate themselves in their professional world. It is identity work, but identity work done by making relevant at a local level such categories (Schegloff 2007) that are meaningful to these people in this situation. Craft is a field of diverse disciplines whose literature has found various ways to categorise its people, (Chapter 2). Here we find participants, the exhibitors, and some of their interlocutors positioning and coalescing toward a category of

'maker'. This is then used as a basis to align to a range of other creative practices not immediately (etically) attributable to craft. The second part of the chapter focusses on a particular word: 'process'. The word is made relevant in the data at a number of points. I chose to analyse its use amongst the participants, as it should have some salience to its frequent use in the canonical literature. Craft is often characterised in terms of process; (making) procedures, techniques, and methods can all be conceptually tied to a notion of process. In the analysis the meaning of process can be shown to be fluid and mutable, seemingly offering different communicative affordances at various interactional moments. Its uses exemplify how the "sense of talk is always local and that generalization about the meaning of a word is impossible" (Coulon 1995: 20).

Positioning, as implicated in, and enabled by small stories in interaction remains as a more or less consistent frame through the analytical chapters. I develop the argument made in chapter four in chapter five. Here I show how small stories can underpin the participants' positions by affording a layer of critical self-awareness to the local discourse. The idea of 'the other', as articulated through explicit categories in order to substantiate the category of 'maker', is amplified in chapter five as the participants seek to present themselves as being different. This is done by telling small stories as counter-narratives (Giroux et al 1996, Bamberg 2004) told against the hegemonic narratives (Giroux et al) that shape orthodoxies in practices and cultural expectations. For these makers, talk does the work of distancing themselves from conventional expectations. Small stories are deployed as exempla as part of the ongoing local business: They can be seen to ratify claims and exemplify argumentation and position-taking. Although occasioned as integrated within the interactional business, the narratives are used as resources. The remainder of chapter five shows how reflection and hypothesis are worked-up as interactional accomplishments through small stories and to some extent brings into question assumptions that reflection is particular to big story formats (Bamberg 2007, Freeman 2007, Helsig 2010).

The participants are in a professional situation and are making relevant professional concerns. I argue that no matter how convivial the events were, the key participants were in the business of presenting their professional selves. Chapter five has alluded to this and remained more or less concerned with positioning done through small stories. In chapter six I address more fully the idea of performance. Even though the events might be perceived as 'low key', the stakes are also high as the exhibiting makers perform their selves. I start by

suggesting that the events, no matter how apparently convivial, are in Goffman's terms theatrical. The analytical discussion is grounded in a linguistic-anthropological approach (Bauman 1975, Hymes 1974, Bauman & Briggs 1990). The 'smallness' of the narratives in the data are elevated by the view that: "performance can also describe what is often found in the most ordinary of encounters, when social actors exhibit a particular attention to the skills in the delivery of a message" (Duranti 1997: 16). The relevance of the talk's setting, its social context, is shown to shape how stories told by two of the key participants, Dan and John. Lexical choice can be shown to account for various subjectivities in their audiences. The analysis also shows how poetic devices, such as repetition and rhythmic patterning shape *how* the narrative is told. Stories told by Haley and Liz show further poetic strategies such as tripartite lists. The stories also exemplify Chafe's (1990) concept of the idea unit as emblematic of talk's contingent assembly in the now. I argue that the poetic and performance strategies serve to further how the speakers position themselves and others, and draw together positioning and performance. I work with Bamberg's (1997) model that affords a method to analytically separate three levels of narrative context.

The final analytical chapter, chapter seven, to some extent returns to the beginning of the analysis. I use an observation from chapter four as a point of departure, where (in chapter four) I note that very little, if any, of the participants' talk is topically about 'making things' i.e. explications of material transformations. This is an apparent contradiction of a craft literature that locates craft epistemology in skilful making and knowledge of materials and technologies. How, then, for a coalition of disciplines where "materials are always part of the point" (Koplos 2002: 82) do materials figure in situated talk? I turn again to positioning (Davies & Harré 1990), but in distinction to the work in chapter four that was predicated on more or less explicit category references, I turn to the point of view that the "hallmark of positioning, however, is to recover how positions are invoked by more implicit, indexical practices", (Deppermann 2015: 382-3).

The analysis shows that orienting to category of maker (Chapter 4) is underpinned by an ongoing turn to material resources in talk; lexical references to the material and physical world. These are frequently indexes to, and make relevant aspects of shared professional contexts. Taking space to be a material construct, the chapter then proceeds to the claim that time has canonically been held to be the primary organisational axis of narrative structure, at the expense of

space (Baynham 2003). I show how participants organise the structural design of their narrative, incorporating literal and metaphorical constructs of space and place.

I begin with a discussion of the discourses and literature that have shaped contemporary craft.

## **Chapter 2. Categorisation, positioning, silence, and narrative: craft's structuring discourses.**

### **2.0 Introduction.**

In this chapter I show that contemporary craft, as a field, an amalgamation of practices, has been, and continues to be, a product of discourses. I show two core arguments: on the one hand craft, and its literature relies heavily on language, on the other hand, significant portions of the literature claim, ironically, that craft and language are antithetical. Partitioning craft and language in this way has meant that micro, emic representations of craft practice have not always had the discursive space to flourish, leaving a vacuum to be occupied by macro, etic perspectives.

#### **2.0.1 Outline of the chapter.**

I begin by showing how, in section 2.1, what is known as 'contemporary craft' emerged from particular institutionally-driven forces and policies. The argument follows the line that contemporary craft did not simply exist a-priori as a given mixture of related but distinct practices in the visual arts. Instead, it can be shown that from the 1940s onward, UK government support and advocacy for the crafts has adopted a particular model of craft. This has tended toward an aspiration of positioning a particular type of craft as culturally analogous to the fine arts. Indeed, the founding policies of the Craft Centre of Great Britain (1948) excluded support or advocacy of traditional and vernacular crafts, and trade crafts. In a comparable timeframe, from 1960 onwards, UK government policies in arts education instituted fundamental changes in how art subjects, and craft subjects as a part of this overall curriculum, were to be taught. Principally, the changes introduced formal requirements for historical, and following this, theoretical studies. Taken along with changes in higher education funding in the 1990s, changes that put academic research as central to funding regimes, craft, in the space of a few decades, found itself needing to engage more wholly with language.

A great deal of craft's newly-emerging literature emanated from university art departments and its advocating bodies such as the Crafts Council (2.2). The ways in which craft has been perceived and presented has also been in large part due to the Craft Council's magazine; *Crafts*. One of the key projects of *Crafts* magazine has been to culturally position craft in the 'public eye' and as a part of this, within particular contexts and discourses of the visual arts and material culture.

In section 2.3 I work from Greenhalgh (2002) and claim that craft has been written about from a range of etic perspectives that have done little to account for emic accounts of craft practice. I argue that while expanding the literature and attempting to legitimise and position craft, these hegemonic narratives (Giroux et al 1996) have also gone some way to limiting the frames and perspectives in which craft is discussed and critiqued in shaping a crafts canon.

I take from two of craft's hegemonic narratives that inform my critical position: Categorising craft (2.4), and partitioning craft from language by the orthodoxy of tacit knowledge (2.5).

One of the hegemonic narratives is the topic of tacit knowledge. Whilst considerable quantities of words have pegged out a discourse of craft's disputed territories and identities, a similarly durable and pervasive theme in the literature has upheld the apparent contradiction that craft and language are antithetical. In section 2.5, whilst acknowledging that it is indeed difficult to convey with words how to make things, I argue that the crafts literature's separation of craft and language is in large part due to an over-emphasis on knowing how to make things as the irreducible yet unexpandable core of 'craft knowledge'. My central departure from the crafts literature is that too little attention has been paid to what language accomplishes and enables in practice without predetermining any findings with expectations of explications of practical knowledge.

In section 2.6 I show that, partly as result of the pervading view that 'craft knowledge is tacit therefore craft is somehow alien to language', and partly because of particular resistances to theoretical perspectives, craft has had a troubled relationship with theory. This is of course a generalisation, but with considerable foundation, as by the end of the 1990s writers such as Johnson (1998), Harrod (1997), and Rowley (1992) had identified it as a problematic condition if craft wanted to play a full part in contemporary visual and material culture.



My point in this thesis is that language plays a central part in craft practice. I am not claiming a special place for craft, language plays a central part in most cultural practices. But rather, highlighting that when pursuing an understanding of craft, language has emanated from, and focused on, the abstract explanations of a largely academic literature. My argument is to attend to the uses of language in practice, and in section 2.7 I describe some of those moments and occasions when a professional craft practitioner inevitably uses language to communicate their practice. In section 2.8 I outline how narrative has been used in a multitude of ways to mobilise the doing of craft and the communication and presentation of craft. I then make an argument for narrative theory as a response to the data and the craft literature.

## **2.1 The institutional and discursive forging of ‘contemporary craft’.**

As outlined in 1.3 any reductive definition of craft has a relationship to “the application of skill and material-based knowledge” (Adamson 2010: 2). Throughout most of the twentieth century these skills and knowledge were taught at art schools, building colleges, trade schools, and through apprenticeships detached from academic teaching. The idea of the contemporary craft practitioner that emerged from the 1960s onward is of a skilled practitioner who is reflexively aware of the discipline’s histories and cultural relationships and whose work responds to those discourses. The emergence of this type of practitioner is a direct consequence of changes in the education system, how other institutions moved to culturally re-position craft, and a wider ‘turn to theory’ in the 1960s. The way that craft evolved in the decades following the 1940s led to a greater interplay between craft and language. This is partly due to craft becoming part of, and the subject of, more and larger discourses, and partly the changes instituted to craft by those discourses.

In 1960 the UK government published The Coldstream Report. The report’s purpose was to re-align art qualifications to have parity with academic undergraduate degrees. Its key proposal was that art teaching was to incorporate about 15% of historical and complimentary studies in courses. The report also proposed re-aggregating subjects under a matrix of four major areas: fine art, graphic design, three-dimensional design, and textiles and fashion. It signalled a shift “between an educational system based on disciplined studies of techniques and crafts to one based on conceptual thinking and design.” (Aspinall 2014).

Craft skills became subsidiary to the design and art professions that they enabled, presaging Adamson's (2007) positioning of craft as "supplemental".

But the report did not suggest what actually constituted the content or academic standards of a sound engagement with historical and complimentary studies. Decisions on content were left to local deliberation and varied from tutor to tutor (Candlin 2001: 304). Four years later the Summerson Report criticised the implementation of the Coldstream recommendations noting "a certain resistance to the whole idea, as if History of Art were some tiresome extraneous discipline which was being imposed on the natural body of art studies" (Summerson report 1964 in Candlin 2001: 305). The perceived distance between studio practice and classroom theory was exacerbated partly because the two aspects were taught separately by different staff, different departments, and in different locations. In such a way, practice and language were spatially dislocated. The Coldstream report didn't so much as impose a pedagogy or teaching framework of thus far undefined complimentary studies. Rather, it paved the way for theoretical explanations of craft. Government discourse, determining what type of qualification an arts education should be, was changing what an arts college leaver would 'be', re-shaping their professional identity.

In 1974 the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design was subsumed by the Council for National Academic Awards. The former Diploma qualification became a first-degree Bachelor of Arts and: "In future art and design will be regarded and treated as an integral part of higher education rather than an isolated subject area with its own institutions, procedures and validation body" (cited in Candlin 307). In a decade and a half, teaching and qualifications in art had shifted from the wholly practical toward the academic. The changes of 1974 were sharpened as the polytechnics, the most usual home of art departments, gradually took up university status under the terms of the government white paper on higher education of 1991. The change to university status brought with it changes to how the former art colleges were funded by central government. Part of a university's funding is determined by the quality and quantity of its research.

It is important to remember that these changes affected *higher* education. At the same time and sometimes within the same institutions (notably the polytechnics) many craft subjects were being taught to *further* education qualifications, Diplomas and City and Guilds. The chief difference being the lack of the

'academic' content and a greater emphasis on workshop training rather than studio-based design. The two educational pathways, higher and further, led to differently qualified practitioners linked by common interests in particular materials and subjects but with differing attitudes and emphases on how they might work with their subject. The introduction of theory and history content to art college courses is a key element in the institutional constituting of 'contemporary craft'. A second element was the various ways in which the UK government sought to advocate and support the crafts.

Government advocacy for the crafts coalesced in 1948 with the establishment of the Crafts Centre of Great Britain. Harrod is clear that from the outset The Crafts Centre "Unlike the Council for Industrial Design and the Arts Council...had to grapple with the minute problems of definition of the kind which had been debated endlessly by the Red Rose Guild and Crafts Exhibition Society before the war" (1999: 211). The definitions in the terms of reference determine what particular version of craft was to be supported: "Fine craftsmanship as embodied in the work of the designer craftsman in the fine arts" (in Harrod 1999: 211). Vernacular crafts (such as hurdle making and thatching) and trade crafts such as watch-making were considered to be outside of The Centre's remit. Harrod argues that the establishment of The Centre "effectively defined the boundaries of 'fine craftsmanship' for government and arts policy makers for the rest of the century" (1999: 211). The orientation to 'fine arts', does, as Harrod suggests, direct attention to a particular cultural field; a field that has a higher cultural status than craft (Lucie-Smith 1981, Metcalf 1997, Lees-Maffei & Sandino 2004). But the definition is equally imprecise in defining 'fine' in any meaningful way and by couching it as 'embodied' sets any delineation of such qualities in the individual. The notion of craft being embodied presages Dormer's (1994) assertions on craft skills (see also Frayling & Snowdon 1982). The language used sets the conditions for an institutionally sanctioned craft avant-garde and sets up two of craft literature's hegemonic narratives of identity (Giroux et al 1996): on the one hand the Centre's definition of craft establishes an explicit relationship to fine art. On the other hand, the Board of Trade (who funded The Centre) insisted that The Centre's remit should include influencing the quality of industrial design.

Funding problems and internal debates caused the eventual collapse and subsequent restoration of the UK's national body for the crafts and in 1970 the Crafts Advisory Committee was formed (see Harrod 1999, Harper 2013). Funding switched from the board of trade to the Paymaster General to sit alongside the

Arts Council, and its concerns were refocussed on the notional 'artist-craftsman' (House of Lords in Harper 2013). This oriented the organisation toward art rather than design.

In 1983 Martina Margetts claimed that institutional and economic attitudes and conditions were massing sufficiently for 'the crafts' to be sustained. As editor of *Crafts Magazine*, she wrote that the crafts were becoming more professionalised, a body of writing was evolving, collectors and investors were beginning to take more notice of crafts as were journalists, and that career paths were being delineated within the education system (Harper: 2013: 74). Margetts was putting forward the missing ingredients for Greenhalgh's view that many things other than "a set of techniques and materials for the production of artefacts" (2002: 19) need to be in place to connote a genre.

In this section I have briefly outlined how contemporary craft has been shaped by the institutions and discourses of government education policies and advocacy bodies. In the next section I show that much of craft's own discourse is the product of those institutions.

## **2.2 Primary sources: where does the literature come from?**

As the previous section outlined, the idea of contemporary craft is a cultural construction. It did not exist a priori, ready-formed, waiting to be written about. I attempted to show that it is predominantly an institutional construction. In this section I suggest that craft's bibliography has come to be dominated by the emergence of the 'craft academic'. This means there is a distance between the discourse and its subject. Writing on the crafts has grown exponentially since the mid-1990s. Arguably more has been written in the last twenty years than had been in the previous two centuries. Despite the growth of titles, Harrod advises "An interest in the crafts demands adventurous book collecting because the subject itself has hardly begun to generate a literature of its own" (2006 in 2015; 148).

If a particular notion called contemporary craft was driven into existence by institutional discursive forces, then it is unsurprising that much of craft's discourse emanates from institutional sources. The practical effect of this is illustrated by the following example.

During the 1990s The University of East Anglia with the Crafts Council and the Eastern Arts Board awarded three fellowships as part of the UEA Fellowship in Critical Studies in Contemporary Craft. Each fellow convened a conference or symposium during their tenure: Peter Dormer (1993) was the first, and this led to his edited volume *The Culture of Craft* (1997). Tanya Harrod followed with a conference and published its proceedings: *Obscure Objects of Desire* (1997). And Pamela Johnson then produced *Ideas in The Making* (1998). The papers from the conferences were published as collections and alongside Dormer's volume presented a significant amount of writing on the crafts in a relatively short period of time. As significant contributions to the discourse they also illustrate quite neatly the means of production of much of the discourse: an institutional mix of a university, the national advisory body for the crafts, a regional arts board (as they existed before the formation of The Arts Council) and a combination of writers, historians, and curators. This is not a criticism but an important point about where, in my view, much of the discourse on craft comes from. Harrod observes in the introduction to the collected papers of the 1997 conference: "Most of these papers were written by non-practitioners of any craft" (1997:9).

A great deal of craft's more recent written discourse aligns to similar patterns of production: Greengalgh (2002), Risatti (2007), Adamson, (2007, 2010, 2013), and Veiteberg (2005), for example, are written from academic posts. While Jonsson (2005), Hickey (1994), Dormer (1997), Coatts (1997), Johnson (2002), and the Think Tank series of publications (eg Mazanti & Veiteberg 2005) all come from supporting frameworks of national or regional organisations. Both of craft's academic journals are edited from institutional positions: *The Journal of Modern Craft* (since 2008) and *The Journal of Craft Research* (since 2010).

Contemporary craft appears to be quite particular to Anglophone nations and certain northern European countries. Most texts emanate from the UK, USA, Australia, and Canada. In addition a number of texts have emerged from Scandinavia, particularly Norway and Sweden, as well as contributions from Germany and The Netherlands. Across these geographies the dominant theme is of publication from academic and institutional positions.

Bruce Metcalf, a freelance writer and jeweller based in the USA, makes the point that writing from academic and institutional positions skews the marketplace (2002:104). His view is that with a secure salary an academic can effectively write for nothing. Notwithstanding a discussion on the professional pressures an academic might face, Metcalf's point is that independent voices are priced out of

the marketplace. Metcalfe's is a financial criticism but it should also be noted that academic writing is a particular type of writing. Practitioners not attuned to writing to academic conventions face stylistic obstacles too. Writers such as Koplos (2002) and Hemmings (2014) have called into question just what are appropriate ways to write about craft. The exclusionary effect of the entrenchment of particular styles is reflective of institutional gatekeeping (Erickson & Schultz 1982).

Harrod has observed that the visibility of craft's writing was problematic: "During the 1950s and 1960s informed writing about the crafts had taken place in a vacuum. Radical weavers wrote of each other's work in the pages of the Weaver's Journal. Potters exchanged ideas in Pottery Quarterly. It was mostly a matter of craftsmen and craftswomen speaking to each other." (1999: 386). Harper observes that during the 1970s, Crafts magazine featured a high proportion of articles written by craftspeople and that "Both the tone of the writing and the nature of the advertising in the magazine, which is dominated by adverts for tools, materials and services for makers, suggest that the readership was largely made up of craft practitioners". (Harper 2013: 73). Dormer identifies a similar problem in the 1990s. He reflects on writing and craft's marginal cultural importance, concluding that the crafts are a *salon de refuse* and that "the work and rhetoric is of interest and significance mainly to members of the *salon*" (1997:15). Harrod, Harper, and Dormer are all in one way or another making the point that during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, craft was failing to communicate its writings to broader audiences. A case for a limited audience can be extended to today. A larger number of titles are being published, but through academic publishers, journal articles are most readily accessed by those in a university, and conferences are most usually attended by academics and institutional staff.

Amongst the more visible places to find writing on the crafts was (and continues to be) Crafts magazine. Launched in 1973 by the Crafts Advisory Committee, "the aim was to create a discourse for the crafts, with curators and commentators able to frame and answer appropriate questions for an appropriate audience" (Harrod 1999:386). Despite the Crafts Advisory Committee's declared commitment to a contemporary version of craft, Crafts magazine frequently featured rural and vernacular crafts amongst the articles positioning craft as urbane and modern (see Sandino 2007). Crafts magazine has gone on to reflect and embrace the changing nature of craft's meanings and cultural associations.

Two comprehensive multi-disciplinary histories have emerged on either side of the Atlantic, both through university presses. Harrod, in what has become the standard volume on the subject, observes how the crafts, in the various ways it has been understood and presented, has been a part of culture, industry, and the arts through the twentieth century in the UK (1999). Her thematic approach is partially reflected in Metcalf and Koplos (2010) as they survey a similar period in the USA but they abide to a more formal 'progressive line' of notable individuals, objects, and events.

Harrod's words: "An interest in the crafts demands adventurous book collecting because the subject itself has hardly begun to generate a literature of its own" (2006 in 2015; 148) are simultaneously disputed and confirmed by Adamson in his introduction to *The Craft Reader*: "One so often hears the complaint that craft suffers from a lack of intelligent writing...but plenty has been written on the subject." (2010:1). On the one hand, he is disagreeing – that there is a body of 'craft literature'. On the other hand, it can be argued that many of *The Reader's* texts are not explicitly 'of craft' but that they have been 'adventurously collected' to consciously assemble a bibliography. On this point the opening editorial of *The Journal of Modern Craft* turns to introduce a regular strand of 'core texts' "To underline the fact that modern craft has a bibliography as rich and varied as many other cultural phenomena, if we take the time to find it." (2008: 6). The particular core text, a lecture given in 1973 by the design critic, Reyner Banham, then existed as a single transcript held in the V&A archives. Assembling the bibliography is evidently a time-consuming scholarly process with resources not available to all.

In this section I suggest that there is a distance between a discourse and its subject. The discourses around craft are largely owned by its institutions with little access to some of its content available to practitioners without institutional affiliation. The situation arises where crafts practitioners might be the subject of a discourse without necessarily being part of it. This isn't necessarily unusual as many academic disciplines have distance between discourse and subject. But it is worth noting as craft, by some representations, is linked to the everyday, and to humanising aspects of experience. Yet here we can see its discourse as remote and distant. This goes some way to contextualise and flesh out my working definition of a 'contemporary crafts practitioner' (1.3). The contemporary craft practitioner sits in this interzone, studio-based but attuned to at least some aspects of the academic discourse and sometimes the subject of that discourse.

They are most usually products of the new university art school system and frequently work part-time or are associated with one or more of those schools. The practitioner-writings of the 1970s and 1980s admired by Harrod were for the most part by craftspeople who were graduates of the art school system who would return to teach at those institutions (for example Allison Britton, Caroline Broadhead, and Michael Rowe). They signified and embodied an emerging system of co-existence and inter-reliance, practitioners as aspects of discourse, able to respond with work that, in turn, provided more to write about.

I have shown that much of craft's discourse has emanated from craft's educational and supporting bodies. In the next three sections I discuss what I argue have come to be orthodox themes in the discourse: firstly, I sketch the major topical pre-occupations of much craft writing, before focussing on categorising craft (2.4) and tacit knowledge (2.5).

### **2.3 Canonical topics and hegemonic narratives.**

In the previous section I argued that, as institutionally structured discourses, craft's discourses are often remote from their subject. I suggest that most of these hegemonic perspectives look *at* craft, rather than present a view *from* craft. They bring an etic analysis, but lack an emic sensibility.

Surveying craft literature since the 1970s Greenhalgh lists the "most important (issues)...that have come to the fore to worry us": Classification, Economy, Amateurism, Technology, Morality, Ethnicity, Place, Domesticity, Museology, Gender, History, Modernity, and Quality. (2002: 4). Much subsequent writing on the crafts has continued these topical concerns (see, for example, Adamson 2010). These overarching frames can be conceived of as a set of grand, or hegemonic narratives (Lyotard 1984, Giroux et al 1996).

Greenhalgh's categorisation of canonical topics shows that most are determined from perspectives of art history, material culture studies, gender studies, morality, and politics, for example. While expanding the way that craft is considered and connected to other phenomena (thus going some way to counter the concerns noted in the previous section from Harrod and Dormer that craft was speaking in some kind of vacuum), I suggest that most of these hegemonic frames look *at* craft through the lenses of other disciplines. I claim that they have, to some extent, constrained how craft has been perceived and communicated. This is not



to negate any validity in this literature but rather to note how it might enable a critical position that would take note of and resist their essentialist frames and propose an emic analysis of craft practice.

I argue that emic perspectives from craft practice are rare in the literature: by way of example, the chapter in *The Craft Reader* (Adamson 2010) titled 'Craft in Action: Life, Art and Design' is suggestive of a collection of papers that might be more inclusive of a craft practitioner's perspective, and 'life' and 'action' possibly point toward process and contingency; something other than the study of the object. But again, the papers are largely concerned with craft's relationship to art and design, what craft does for these fields. When the analyst is not a craft practitioner and theoretical methods and perspectives are used to examine how a subject might 'fit' to a prescribed system rather than articulate a subject, there therefore exists an *etic* perspective: "The etic perspective is one which is culture-independent and simply provides a classification of behaviors on the basis of a set of features devised by the observer/researcher" (Duranti 1997: 172). The argument for an *emic* perspective "one that favors the point of view of the members of the community under study" (Duranti 1997: 172) frames the methods discussed in chapter three.

The most obvious omission from Greenhalgh's list of "issues that have come to worry us" is the topic of making things. This could come under 'technology', by whatever way craft is defined, it usually involves a materially-existing artwork, deliberately made. But technology, is more often than not used as a framework by which to discuss how a concept of craft fits relationally to, say, automated production or computer-aided design, i.e. to help define craft. In categorising his thirteen issues Greenhalgh is doing much to define his use of "us". I suggest Greenhalgh's "us" is the craft academic, as much as it might be those working in the crafts.

Greenhalgh's delineation of craft-writing's topical preoccupations and the recent publication of *The Reader* (2010) go some way to establishing, or recognising a canonical discourse, or at least a canonical framework: a body of texts or approaches that invite or define topical continuation or response. The establishment of a canon therefore positions craft (or the writing about craft) as a modern project alongside art history and literature. But "a canon is seen to function as an instrument of exclusion, through the construction of a value

system which legitimates as 'good' those artefacts which mediate or represent the identities of those with cultural power" (Waugh 1995: 59 in Rowley 1997: xvii).

In the next two sections I discuss two topics that have occupied craft's writers to a great extent. One is not in Greenhalgh's list, however. This is tacit knowledge, or the difficulty of describing making with words: The argument that craft is separate from language. But firstly, I turn to categorising craft; defining what craft is, a topic that demonstrates quite clearly craft's dependence on language.

#### **2.4 Positioning craft: the ongoing discourse of defining and categorising what craft is.**

In the previous section I outlined the dominant themes in the craft literature with reference to Greenhalgh (2002). This has followed an argument that the crafts, and its literature, are largely academic and institutional constructs. In this section I focus on Greenhalgh's first topic 'classification', I show how a great deal of craft's literature has revisited the issue of defining what craft is, and what craft isn't. The extensive discussion of categorising craft has become a canonical aspect of the literature.

A major task of craft's discourses has been to define and categorise craft. Much discursive energy has gone into defining and categorising just what craft is, and sometimes, as importantly, what craft isn't. Craft has been variously positioned as analogous to, or as an opposition to, the fine arts, design, industrial production, and artisanal trades (see 2.1 & 2.2). While craft has often been portrayed as a necessary, indeed vital part of, say, industrial production (Pye 1968), for example, tool-makers and pattern-makers in the automotive industry, others write that as the required adjunct to conceptual art, for example, welding technicians and marble-quarry workers, craft skills remain "supplemental" to artistic conceptual labour (Adamson 2008). Craft is conceived of as a choice in a landscape of industrially produced consumer goods.

From its formation in 1971, the Crafts Advisory Board sought to position the emerging 'new crafts' as having a similar cultural status and market value as fine art. As noted above, the board's magazine *Crafts* avowedly promoted the urbane and contemporary. As a category of objects, the crafts were rooted in skilled artisanal labour and artefacts with a utility function; the new crafts tended to

negate, or question utility. To culturally re-locate those objects they needed to be spoken and written about differently and re-categorised.

A canonical point at which craft practice was loosened from utility function is recognised as Slivka's "The New Ceramic Presence" (1961). Slivka made an argument for the painterliness and paintness of ceramic practice: "Today, the classical form has been subjected and even discarded in the interests of surface – an energetic, baroque clay surface with itself the formal 'canvas', and the structure of the 'canvas' are a unity of clay." (In Adamson 2010: 528). Her ardent writing style put forward the view that "As a result, modern ceramic expression ranges in variety from painted pottery to potted painting to sculptured painting to painted sculpture to potted sculpture to sculptured pottery. And often the distinctions are very thin or non-existent" (528). It is interesting to note her use of "expression", a word more suited to painting rather than the utility-bound notion of pottery but equally, she doesn't jettison all references to pottery. The notion of utility and function is distanced but materials and pottery are kept at hand. She effectively sets up the conditions for the pot to be a commentary on pots. Slivka's essay was focussing on ceramicists such as Peter Voulkos. Her valourisation of work of that type and the ways in which ceramicists responded to her writing are an example of the co-constitutional nature of discourse and artefact. The relationship also points up another craft-writing trope: the focus on the heroic singular craft-artist. Loosening craft from its historical bond to utility enabled it to be more readily compared with art.

Greenhalgh (1997: 20-49) proceeds from a view that the crafts have lacked "detailed historical analysis" and tracks the changing meanings of the word craft and its uses since the Enlightenment. He makes the case that 'the crafts' as a current coalition of practices simply do not fit to a historical precedent. In the same volume, Heslop (1997: 53-66) attempts to clarify the current unsettled set of relationships by examining artisanal working practices and artefacts in medieval Europe. Greenhalgh pursues his case, based on definitions and lexicons from the standpoint that "Craft has always been a supremely messy word" (2002:1). This is because "it was not a thing *in itself*" (1997: 22) but rather had always represented a set of qualities. Marchand (2016: 3-10) outlines a social and linguistic history of craft casting it as polythetic, a grouping of practices that share characteristics but that those characteristics are not all essential for membership.

Almost sixty years from the inception of the Crafts Council, its subject's definition is still a fruitful topic of discussion, 'messy' indeed. Historically 'craft' has connoted guile and cunning, masonic ritual, the occult, as well as "a manual art or trade" (Johnson's dictionary in Greenhalgh 1997: 22). All of these meanings have more or less remained in usage. Frayling (2011) pursues a similar historic-linguistic line and observes the word craft's more recent permeation into discourses of advertising and the general point that craft's meaning has as much to do with who is using the word as anything else (7-26). Frayling's essay reminds us that 'craft's' meaning depends on its situatedness. As the author of one of craft's most enduring texts, *The Nature of Art and Workmanship* (1968) it is notable that David Pye hardly mentions the category craft, focusing his thesis on the qualities and attributes of workmanship.

The agreement that craft is representative of a set of *qualities* links texts having differing aspirations. The sociologist Richard Sennett aims for socio-political improvement, that "The working human animal can be enriched by the skills and dignified by the spirit of craftsmanship" (2008: 286) while art-historian Glenn Adamson's treatise takes crafts "supplementary" identity to re-locate it firmly as a vital aspect of avant-garde practice: "in the very marginality that results from craft's bounded character, craft finds its indispensability to the project of modern art...craft's inferiority might be the most productive thing about it" (2007: 4). An underlying bond of direct relationships to materiality has been one of the characteristics that has brought together a group of practices that "have no intrinsic cohesion...no a priori relationship" (Greenhalgh 2002: 1) they "never lose sight of what they are made of...the medium never becomes invisible...but is always part of the point" (Koplos 2002: 82). From their differing perspectives both Adamson and Sennett might find their contemporary Rissatti's analysis peculiarly anachronistic. He finds "fine art aesthetic theory" unhelpful in establishing terms. Instead, he claims "this can be done by looking to those *objects* that have traditionally defined the field" (2007: 15 my italics), objects that have "at their core, practical physical function that unites what would be distinct areas of activity" (Rissatti 2007: 18). Perhaps, ironically, the situation can be summed up by paraphrasing the titles of two articles in *Crafts* In 2015 and 2016. The question was asked 'Is craft losing its meaning?' the question assumes that 'craft' ever had or has a fixed meaning.

The discussion so far has rested on defining craft in units at the level of the sentence and above – papers, articles, and chapters that skilfully and carefully deploy language to argue craft's position in the world. Another case can be made for the lexical choice of individual words to indicate, label, or name craft. By 1987, for example, 'the pot' had become 'the vessel' and the subject of a conference "as a specific art form with its own critical vocabulary and range of references" (Harrod 1999: 427). Dormer's response in *Crafts* attacked the newly adopted terms and suggested their use implied a lack of certainty in the area (Harrod 1999: 427).

So how does a practitioner identify themselves, and how is their job title named by others? Craftsperson, craftsman, craftswoman, craft-artist, designer-maker, maker, craftist, and artist-craftsman have all been, and continue to be used as non-discipline-specific categories. People are identified after the artefacts that they make: jeweller, potter, cabinet-maker. Various ways of turning to specific materials afford naming rights to silversmith, woodworker, textile artist, and ceramicist, to list a few. In contrast, attending to the processes used by someone allows for embroiderer, weaver, enameller, wood turner, and stone carver.

These names and categories go some way to determining where a practice and its outputs are culturally located. For example, identifying as a fiber artist in the USA or a textile artist in the UK affords a break with the cultural identity of needlework as domestic labour, and exemplified by Magdalena Abakanowicz, Ann Sutton, and Shelley Goldsmith, for example, potentially positions textiles within art discourses. Questioning the role of textile-making as domestic labour also enables engagement with feminist discourses as exemplified by Lippard (1978), Parker (1984), Parker & Pollock (1987). Being a designer-maker signals an orientation to design as well as making, that the practitioner considers individual or new forms and responses as central to their work as opposed to practiced repetition of historic/existing forms.

These categories signal things to, and are used by, institutions. But these same institutions can be equally uncertain what to call people and things.

In 1981 the Crafts Council became sensitised to the inherent sexism in the word 'craftsman', their publication and exhibition titles until then had used the term universally. The generic 'craftsperson' and specific 'craftsman and craftswoman' were adopted (Harrod 1999: 408). The British Craft Centre changed its name to Contemporary Applied Arts in 1987 "to give a clearer indication of the sort of work

its membership produces. The new name is descriptive but neutral, without attempting to draw a line between craft and industry, and craft and fine art". (Crafts 1987: 8 in Harper 2013). Whatever else it is doing, the name change makes clear that 'the crafts' are still determining themselves relationally to industrial design and fine art. The use 'applied arts' gained traction soon after, when in 1989 Crafts magazine adopted the subtitle 'The Decorative and Applied Arts Magazine'. The orientation to applied art didn't last long though; in 2006 the subtitle changed to The Magazine for Contemporary Craft. Similar changes happened in the USA, where in 2002 the Museum of Contemporary Craft in New York changed its name to The Museum of Arts and Design. As interesting as the adoption or rejection of 'craft' is the use of 'contemporary'. Despite its widespread adoption there seems to be no definition of its use. Defining craft's boundaries has and continues to be of linguistic significance in craft's literature (see Sandino & Lees Maffei 2004).

The question was still felt meaningful enough to raise in the editorial of the first issue of The Journal of Modern Craft; declaring the aim of "treating such categorical dilemmas as historical phenomena in their own right, rather than as conundrums to answer definitively" when considering the question "Craft – is it art, or isn't it?" (2008: 7).

In this section I have shown how durable the discussions around categorising craft have been. I next discuss the canonical assumption that craft knowledge is tacit: other than language, this establishes my key point of departure from the literature.

## **2.5 "What can only be shown cannot be written about": the orthodoxy of tacit knowledge.**

In this section I discuss a durable and pervasive theme in the literature: the view that 'craft knowledge' is difficult to express propositionally, therefore, by extension, craft and language are antithetical.

With its roots in artisanal trades and the organisation of labour implicit in the guilds system, historically, craft has guarded what might be special to it by vows of secrecy and silence (Heslop 1997, Lucie-Smith 1981). An orthodoxy of the silence of practice resonates with canonical aspects of contemporary crafts literature. But the overall rationale for such a condition might be said to have

shifted from *will not*, to *cannot*. The normative historic reason for silence was to protect and privilege certain types of knowledge within highly organised and hierarchical trade frameworks. The present reason is predicated on an accepted view that it is difficult to describe how to do certain things with language. The condition that it is difficult to represent practical knowledge propositionally found its most outspoken exponent in the crafts literature in Peter Dormer (1994). He built on the writings of Polanyi (1958), Janik (1990), and Harrison (1978), making a case that the local knowledge in much practical problem solving cannot be said. Richard Sennett reminds us of the historical entrenchment of this view, citing commentary from Diderot's *Encyclopedia* of the 18<sup>th</sup> century regarding gathering information about working practices from skilled artisans: "among a thousand, one will be lucky to find a dozen who are capable of explaining the tools or machinery that they use with any clarity" (Sennett 2008: 94). Sennett is clear that inarticulacy is more to do with the capacity of language rather than a reflection of the artisan's intellect. Adamson addresses the point in the opening lines of *The Craft Reader*, citing a 1677 treatise on handicrafts "which cannot be taught by words" (Moxon 1677 in Adamson 2010: 1) to reflect on the paradox of the job of pulling together a body of texts to explain craft.

A similar view is held by Frayling and Snowden in the fifth of a series of essays published in *Crafts* over the course of 1982: "craft...involves a kind (of knowledge) which cannot (be formalised or generalised) – because it is informal, tacit, individual and demonstrable only through the actual process of making." (In Houston 1988:129). Frayling and Snowden presage Sennett's view, citing an extract from Steadman, *The Evolution of Designs* (1979), as typifying academic literature on design. The cited extract denigrates the notion of a craftsman's (sic) embodied knowledge of their practices. Frayling and Snowden conclude that in the view of academic literature "because craft knowledge is not easily expressible in a formal and systematic way, it is not to be counted as knowledge at all". The relationship between design and craftsmanship had been reflected upon a decade and a half earlier by educator and practitioner David Pye: "Design is what, for practical purposes, can be conveyed in words and by drawing: workmanship is what, for practical purposes, can not" (1968:17) and "Workmanship is what for practical purposes the designer cannot give effective instructions about by drawings or words" (1968: 51).

Language's appropriateness for communicating craft processes is questioned by Marchand (2010). Conducting micro-level research on how woodworking students learn skills from a teacher at the bench, he summarises the problem thus: "Verbal instructions are necessarily impoverished because linguistic propositions can only convey information about one salient action at a time...Propositional representations flatten three-dimensional practice into the sequential order imposed by language, thereby rendering simultaneity time-linear" (2010: 112). The portrayal of tacit knowledge has continuing visibility and fascination in the literature, Martin (2016: 71-86), for example, fleshes out the established case in a study of bicycle mechanics.

The problem of describing the doing of craft propositionally appears, then, to have preoccupied many writers. Some, I would suggest, have used the condition to exoticise craft. But it is plain that the problem of translating practical action into language is not peculiar to craft. Take, for example, Levinson's view in *Space, Language, and Cognition*: "the metric precision involved in seeing a cup before me, judging its distance from me and reaching for it – there is nothing like this metric precision in ordinary language locative descriptions." (2003: 15). Many specialist fields encounter lexical poverty, Harré, Brockmeier, and Mühlhäusler comment on non-existing terms in the discourse on environmentalism: "there is no adequate lexical term in English (for) non-biodegradable...a short word for 'to separate garbage'...a word for the needless transshipping of commodities...to where they are available – we suggest – 'to Newcastle'" (1999: 31). Taken together, describing actions, and naming things, describes much of the job of writing about making craft.

The problem of representing tacit knowledge in university research and higher level degrees has formed part of the discourses constituting contemporary craft, historically as seen in 2.3 and ongoing as (for example) the core concern of the Design Research Society's Experiential Knowledge Special Interest Group series of conferences (2007-15).

Those wanting to convey how making might be done via printed paper have recognised this poverty and made other arrangements. For example, Diderot's *Encyclopedia*, 'how to' books aimed at the amateur crafter, technical books for the professional (eg Feingold & Seitz 1983), and ethnographic studies (eg Harper 1987) employ a high number of photographs, line drawings, and diagrams to get their points across



By this route, tacit knowledge, as embodied is ascribed to the individual, a curious paradox given Dormer's mistrust of individual expression in modern craft. But in doing so it also exoticises such knowledge and distances it from being considered in terms of social interaction.

Dormer went on to extend his view beyond the practicalities of making things to embrace other ways that craft might be communicated propositionally to claim that "Craft and theory are like oil and water" (1997: 219). He brought his contribution, as the final chapter in his edited volume "The Culture of Craft" (1997) to a close with the words: "What can only be shown cannot be written about, and to those who think there can be a theory and critical language of craft that is a warning worth heeding. If they do not then they will distort the integrity of the very subject they profess to respect." (229-230). Dormer was a powerful advocate of skilful making, positioning himself against the notion that ideas can be separable from execution, how some had viewed the evolution of the 'new' crafts through the 1970s and 1980s. He saw novelty and individuality in the crafts as overvalued and distrusted the notion that a poorly executed piece of work could be worked up by theoretical argument, writing "Conceptual crafts exist primarily in words, with objects acting as symbols or pegs. The goals of such practitioners can be fought out in discussion and in philosophical debate" (1997: 228). The separation of an object and theoretical discussion finds voice more recently. Adamson writes "I do not think all craft demands critical analysis. A modern object that ticks all the craft boxes...does not necessarily present an interesting case for theoretical discourse" (2007: 169). Dormer and Adamson, I would argue, are both predetermining the theme or direction of any possible theoretical discourse.

Dormer seems to be rejecting theory as much as problematising any issue of communicating practical knowledge. His view of what theory is, something utterly distinct from making practices presages Adamson's stance. Both Dormer and Adamson, and other voices that constitute the 'tacit canon', too readily locate a notion of 'craft knowledge' in an annexable repository of knowing how to make things. This position reinforces a narrow view of what language can be for.

This section has mapped one of the key orthodoxies, hegemonic narratives, of the crafts literature: tacit knowledge. In the next section I show how craft's partition from language proved problematic for craft's relationship and engagement with theoretical discourse.

## 2.6 Craft and theory

By rejecting theory, and like Adamson, conflating different notions such as 'critical' and 'theoretical' language, craft practice becomes more readily dislocated from theoretical discourse, even the theoretical discourse about itself. Dormer must be contextualised in the times he was writing, he was reacting to a period of greater linguistic engagement than the crafts had had in the preceding decades. His views have held peculiar sway, gaining traction at the time with many practitioners. Amongst them might be those students who, during the 1970s, protested against the academisation of craft, such as at Hornsey College of Art. Craftspeople whose practices were aligned to more straightforward business models, furniture making was notable in this regard, and those who followed respected craftspeople such as Hans Coper and Lucie Rie in advocating that the work could, and should speak for itself. The theoretical turn in crafts education was not universally well-received by students or well-remembered by all as an aspect of their education in the years after, as these responses in interviews in 1988 serve to illustrate:

"I don't see much place for theory or knowledge, knowledge can interfere. Sometimes it's better not to know too much in order to be able to feel."  
(Anonymised in Frayling & Snowden 1988: 130).

"Theory? Read *The Painted Word* by Tom Wolfe to see what I think about theory!" (131) (Wolfe's *The Painted Word* (1975) is a vehemently critical take on the modern artworld complex and its exaltation of legitimacy through theory and dematerialisation of the art object).

Dormer's words "craft and theory are like oil and water" were intended as a statement of his belief that craft was grounded in practised skill and material appreciation and it could not be translated into words. But, I suggest, it can also be read as an observation of craft's relationship to theory. As Johnson writes in the opening to her paper at the "Ideas in The Making" conference, "we can observe that during the rise of critical theory, particularly in the 1980s within visual studies, craft makers and mediators remained outside the debate" (1998: 15). In other words, craft had been distant from theoretical discourse.

Johnson observes "Critical writing on the crafts has tended to concern itself with technique and/or biography. We need to develop a model for critical writing which retains what is important here but also connects the crafts to wider cultural debates." (1998: 15). Johnson's 'wider communication' imperative resonates with

Harrod, but Harrod's appeal is directed toward the crafts as a fraternity, that the crafts needs to be able to talk amongst themselves first: "(by the 1970s) each craft had its own technical language and its own fast growing body of technical literature, but the common language that made sense of this multiplicity of activities was almost non-existent" (1999: 409).

Meanwhile, Rowley (1992) proposes a continuum on which craft practitioners might be placed: At one end, those for whom the "discourse of form, function, ornament, medium, technique and skill" are suited. We can see this as roughly analogous with Johnson's and Harrod's assertions noted above on the visibility of technical literature. And those at the other end of the continuum who "despite of their use of materials and techniques found within craft refuse this association with craft, and are recognised by the artworld as artists" (1992: 166). Rowley asserts that at both ends there exist appropriate critical frameworks (Rowley does not elaborate on how someone is 'recognised' as an artist by the artworld, but it is implicit it is through the engagement in appropriate discourses). Rowley identifies the space between, where the "discursive boundary...is increasingly problematic" (1992: 168), as where the work needs to be done to find more suitable ways of writing. I see this discursive space as the space occupied by the contemporary craft practitioner, one constituted equally by sensitivities to materials and processes and reflexively aware of the circulating discourses: the conceptual ground of this thesis.

Johnson was referring to the theoretical turn across the humanities experienced from the 1960s onward, grounded in structuralism and later post-structuralism and cultural studies. Theory entered art school teaching in the 1960s as an aspect of 'complimentary studies' (2.1). Craft had little if any theoretical bibliography at the time with its most literate and cohesive doctrines still to be found in the writings of William Morris, C. R. Ashbee, and others associated with the Arts and Crafts movement. This, coupled with the lack of any specificity of content suggested within the Coldstream Report (2.1), led to a relatively laissez-faire engagement with multiple aspects of the theoretical turn.

Such an open arrangement afforded a broad range of approaches to theory. Art History had traditionally been concerned with the progressive line of key schools and artists and establishing the canon. It had shown little concern for the social context of the production or consumption of art. The critical approaches of cultural studies and post-structuralism demanded new attention be directed to,

for example, gender, colonialism, environmentalism, and labour-studies. The importance of this recalibration cannot be overplayed but as Harper points out, for the crafts, a paradox arises because the core of post-structuralism's critique of knowledge is essentially literary and rooted in language (2013: 95). Further, many approaches of the theoretical turn were underpinned by semiotics; namely that *things* were signs and the systems the signs animated produce *meanings*. *Meaning* is most predominantly expressed and communicated through words.

To be able to address the cultural discourses of the time, the crafts needed to use language. Craft was taught as part of and in the same institutions as fine art. By the 1960s fine art had a more established body of discourse, and since the earlier part of the twentieth century, as aspects of movements such as Dada, Surrealism, and Futurism, its representation and interpretation had become more reliant on texts. It is unsurprising then that as part of an aggregation of 'art-based' subjects, craft turned to some of those texts. Writing in the introduction to the catalogue of a 1984 jewellery exhibition, Tom Arthur claimed "...it would seem to be no longer a viable proposition for us to attempt an understanding of an object merely as a physical, material entity. Made objects are, to a large extent, the material manifestations of private or societal ideological motivations caught within a world of signs, the meanings of which are in a constant state of flux." (Arthur 1984: 7).

Koplos comments on the way that craft, in a similar way to art, had come to need to have meaning in order to have cultural traction: "Art today is expected to have a meaning that can be articulated verbally as well as visually. Sometimes the artist doesn't do that so well, and it's a critic who fleshes out a concept and furnishes the artist with a vocabulary to use in discussing the work." (Koplos 2002: 84). Koplos's words speak to the co-constitutive relationship between the emerging avant-garde crafts and those who wrote about them. Koplos pursues the discourse/artefact dialectic: as an acknowledgement of the co-relationship between artefacts and the surrounding discourses "criticism is a service profession, an aid to understanding. It is essentially parasitic because it can't exist without the art 'host' to grow upon. Criticism should be helpful, not confusing or intimidating" (2002: 84).

The ceramicist Paul Mathieu wrote “Why is it so seemingly easy to write about art and so difficult to write about crafts? Most texts written about crafts are technical, historical, or subjectively philosophical. It is difficult to comprehend them otherwise. These objects are not easily deconstructed by theory and discourse. In our culture, since art is justified by theory and discourse, crafts can easily be rejected or, at least, their meaning misunderstood. This silence about craft functions like censorship to create a prohibition” (Mathieu 1994: 34). Here, Mathieu’s words speak to Harrod’s observations on the craft literature and the discontent quite generally agreed on the lack of a craft discourse. His point of view highlights the lack of craft’s engagement with discourse, but in a sense his question is, I think, somewhat rhetorical and self-defeating but exemplifies craft’s response to theory. Mathieu acknowledges the subjective and technical approach that has shaped some of craft’s writing but equally he aligns to the status quo of writing about craft as if it were possible to analyse or think about in the same terms as art, signposting one of the key relationships of craft’s identity crisis. Hemmings, in her work on identifying more appropriate ways that craft might use language, addresses this status quo and cites Sarat Maharaj: “the academic voice which has to explicate from within the confines of a stock of approved pre-given sources, authorities and canons” (Maharaj in Hemmings 2014: 24).

Johnson’s observation on the lack of engagement with theory at the beginning of this section is directed at ‘the crafts’ as a discrete world; the complex of institutions, practitioners, writers, and others that constitute an ‘artworld’ (Becker 1982). More acutely, Johnson’s conference was an appeal to practitioners themselves to participate in theoretical discourse. Motivated by Harrod’s (1997: 9) concern that “Most of these papers were written by non-practitioners of any craft” when reflecting upon her own *Obscure Objects of Desire* conference, a notable sixty percent of the papers at Johnson’s conference were from practitioners.

Countering the view of Dormer and Adamson, Rowley, Koplos, and Johnson all contend that articulating craft theoretically is a legitimate pursuit. The rather closed argument about the transmission of tacit knowledge (2.5) and the narrow use of language (2.4) had limited any exploration of how language could do something meaningful to articulate the concerns of craft practice. It is part of this thesis’s premise that there are ways of articulating craft in ways other than might be (albeit) reductively characterised by Greenhalgh’s list of topics. The growing crafts literature indicates that craft and language are intertwined. I argue that it

has been too readily accepted that what is required to be articulated from crafts practice are explications of procedural practical knowledge.

In the next section I show where language *is* used to explain and communicate about craft. The important distinction is that most of the coming discussion focusses on language as used in lived practice, not the abstractions of academic texts. This highlights that much of the foregoing discussion has considered *writing*, to consider language in practice means considering *talking*. This, I argue, is where connections between practice and theory are to be made.

## **2.7 Articulating craft practice.**

I have shown that craft practice is often held to be something ‘other’ to language (2.5) but for those concerned with determining the remit or boundaries of craft language is very important (2.4). Language appears to be both remote and vital. On the one hand, the doing of craft is separated from language but on the other hand, the orthodox representations of craft are thoroughly entwined with it, made of it, even. This section, in which I report on some aspects of the crafts practitioner’s working life, is *emic*.

Despite the orthodoxy of a separation between craft practices and language, sometimes reinforced by the frequent characterisation of craft practice as a solo pursuit, craft practitioners, like most other people, use language as part of their everyday working lives. I will describe and contextualise some of these events and occasions below. They include:

- Talking with customers and visitors at ‘open studio’ events and craft shows.
- Discussing their work as part of a gallery exhibition.
- Presenting and discussing aspects of their work practices to groups of peers and novices.
- Using digital/online media as a representational tool.
- Being interviewed.
- Statements in support of grant applications or exhibiting opportunities.

Crafts practitioners are frequently required to talk about what they do in a number of contexts. One of the Grand Narratives in the crafts literature can be glossed as ‘authenticity’ (2.3); one aspect of authenticity is that craft can be presented as a more accountable, locally derived, historically or geographically located

alternative to machine-produced mass-market products. Part of this web of relations (and of interest here) is the end-user/customer's relationship with the craftsperson. Based on this, both the craftsperson and the consumer might perceive the value of and pursue face-to-face interaction. This is the interactional imperative at the core of 'open studio' events. Craftspeople, especially early in their careers, often work from multiple occupancy studio buildings, typically an old industrial building or even office space and run by an umbrella organisation. The open studio event theoretically benefits all involved: the umbrella organisation promotes its work and its profile, the practitioners meet with people who might buy their work. Either existing customers or the potential of new ones who have come to see someone else's customers meet the craftspeople who are normally less visible in a more orthodox retail context.

A quite similar situation to the open studio is the craft show. A craft show is configured as a retail situation with makers typically set up in individual spaces within a 'shell-scheme' of partition walls. Craft shows are almost always centred on craftspeople rather than galleries and like the open studio they are often promoted as opportunities for the public to meet and buy direct from the maker. The principle difference to the open studio model is the physical context: open studios are in the makers' workshops, which is often a point of attraction for visitors, and craft shows in exhibition halls or civic spaces.

In a similar material context to the open studio, a craftsperson might well have a client to their studio to discuss a new commission or to review work in progress. Galleries need to be communicated with in a number of modes: the practical arrangements of delivering work, explaining the thinking behind a piece of work, or talking about materials and processes.

Although mediated textually, interviews for press are usually conducted verbally. The same transformation from talk to text happens in researcher-elicited interview volumes (Bernabei 2011) and sometimes as part of biographies. A considerable number of oral histories have now been collected in the British Library archives and the Recording the Crafts project at The University of West England.

If a craftsperson has come through the university art department system, they would almost certainly have experienced the 'crit'. Embedded in almost all studio teaching and learning, the 'crit' (contraction of critique) is an opportunity for students to present and discuss their work with peers and staff. Students present

orally with their work, explaining their conceptual and practical processes and justifying the choices they have made (Oak 2004).

Crafts practitioners use blogs and websites to present themselves and their work. Support agencies such as the Crafts Council promote the use of blogging as a promotional and communication tool to makers on their 'Hothouse' scheme (2011 – ongoing). Similarly, 'hot news' platforms such as Twitter are advocated for building up networks of recipients for newsworthy happenings.

It is quite normal as part of an exhibition in a gallery for the exhibiting artist(s) to take part in one or more gallery talks. This is the type of event from which this research's data is drawn. I have discussed this context in 1.6 and the data event more thoroughly in chapter three, but for now it is simply necessary to list it as one of the professional settings where crafts practitioners use language. In summary, a gallery conversation is a publicly accessible event at which the exhibiting artist talks, quite frequently with an interlocutor, about the work on show and their work more generally.

Craft practitioners often need to write a short text that I will call a statement of practice. Usually in the order of 300 words long, a statement of practice is a written text that requires the practitioner to explain the main aims and preoccupations of what they do. Sometimes prompted or directed by terms such as 'with particular reference to materials and techniques', or 'your place in the market', these statements are a part of almost any application process for support or exposure. Institutional support for practitioners is usually targeted at developing what they do in some way. Therefore a second statement sometimes needs to be written, setting out their plans for future work.

These examples of language in use are identifiable events and occasions and to a greater or lesser degree are all part of professional life. Remaining undiscussed are those 'out of hours' events and occasions, moments when work-matters permeate recreational time and space. I am thinking here of the chatter in the pub after the exhibition opening, sharing a cup of tea with a fellow exhibitor during a break at a craft show, discussing an exhibition sitting on the bus. The situations that I sketch in the paragraphs above can, I would argue, be professional life: their occasioning is contingent on being a practising professional. Nonetheless, as social practices many of them are curiously hybrid affairs. For example, at an open studio event, for the practitioner the context is primarily professional, work, the hope of making some sales. Whereas for the



visitor the context is most likely recreational, retail activities on the weekend, getting to see behind normally closed doors. Obviously these aren't hard and fast conditions: the visitor might be a journalist looking for newsworthy content, or a buyer for a retail shop. For the maker it might be an opportunity to have friends and family over to see what they do and share a glass of wine. I pick up on some of these contextual complications in 3.6 and I have alluded to some already in 1.6.

Not all crafts practitioners engage consistently in all of the above scenarios; but I would suggest that most practitioners have engaged in most of them during their working life.

What should be apparent is that for a practitioner their engagement with language is embedded in the expediencies and contingencies of professional practice: local discourse. It is for the greater part language-in-use, spoken, and in the main interactional. Across the examples outlined above, it is highly plausible to assume that craftspeople will be engaging in all four of the major rhetorical modes, as they will be describing what they do, how they go about their work. This might be couched in narrative that includes stories of the working day or how what they do has evolved. Some of the same information might be flatly reported, for example, information on materials or the type of equipment used. A case might need to be made, for instance, arguing the validity of a particular approach versus another to the audience at a gallery talk, or convincing someone they really do want to commission a piece of work.

Talk in craft practice can involve descriptions, explanations, and argumentation in a social and professional context of self-presentation. In the next section I discuss how narrative, in various forms and uses, cuts across craft's discourses.

## **2.8 Craft's multiple mobilisations through narrative.**

In the previous section I showed that crafts practitioners are often expected to engage with language in the day-to-day of their professional lives. In this section I briefly outline how 'the crafts', its practitioners and those who represent it have engaged with one mode in particular: narrative. I then turn to narrative research, and preceding the discussion on narratives-in-interaction in the next chapter, I set out here a case for narrative as an appropriate response to the crafts literature.

The section shows how narrative appears in various manifestations; how “strikingly diverse in the way it is understood” (Andrews et al 2008:2-3) in crafts discourses. The Crafting Narrative Crafts Council exhibition (2014) sought to show how “how makers and designers are using objects and making to tell stories”. ‘Narrative jewellery’ has a body of writing and work, practitioners present ‘the story behind their work’, and life story and biography have been foundational in establishing a body of craft writing. Narrative cuts across craft and its representations. It is employed by practitioners, historians, and writers, and is found across objects, people, places, and processes. A fuller discussion of narrative analysis figures in 3.2 as part of the methodological chapter but here I show that the crafts are familiar with narrative as a broad concept.

### *2.8.1 Narrative in craft practice*

Various craft genres and disciplines are framed by writers and makers themselves as being concerned with narrative. Narratives can be the resource(s) to inform work and artefacts, either personal to the maker or drawing on the stories of others, or narrative can be the product of work that is viewed as having potential to accrue narrative. I briefly outline such approaches through references to one craft discipline, jewellery. As a broad term in the jewellery literature ‘narrative jewellery’ captures a range of meanings. I draw on some comparative examples here: Work by jewellers such as Laura Potter and Lin Cheung (as examples) often derives explicitly from the past experiences and stories of other people that they work with. As a jeweller in the 1980s and 1990s James Evans “designed and made work...as a conventional studio model. However... he became intrigued by what had happened to his works...Evans tracked down his jewellery and recorded the oral stories of those who lived with it.” (Carnac 2013: 237). Most often manifesting as a lecture titled *La Mort du Joaillier*, Evans’ resulting work reminds us how “how the things around us continue to accrue meaning, shape relationship and change in relationship to those around us.” (Carnac 2013: 237). Collecting stories *about* jewellery and representing them in means other than as jewellery, in this case photographic portraits, film, text, and audio, is also found in the work of Mah Rana (Meanings and Attachments 2001 – ongoing). Additionally, “Objects that are used in close relationship to an individual can indicate a personal history, declare a relationship to others, and issues of identity and status.” (Broadhead 2005: 25). When asked by the jeweller and

educator Roberta Bernabei “How would you explain the content or narrative of your work?” the jeweller Iris Eichenberg responded “What is a narrative? Narration does not always need to explain something, but it can also produce a new realm of emotions. Some...works...are not telling a story; rather they enable you to realize something about how you are culturally programmed to interact with the objects that define you.” (Bernabei 2011: 94). Broadhead’s and Eichenberg’s positions both imply social and cultural relationships and interaction as being at the heart of anything that might be termed narrative. Taken alongside Evans’s and Rana’s projects, narrative is ongoing, contingent, and socially constructed.

The broad definition of narrative as seen in jewellery practices can also be seen across other craft disciplines. In ceramics, Richard Slee draws on the narrative potential of domestic objects and ceramic archetype, while Neil Brownsword mines (sometimes literally) the history of ceramic production in his family’s long-time home of Stoke-on-Trent. Narrative is pervasive enough to be devoted a section to itself in the proceedings of Johnson’s Ideas in The Making Conference (1998). In Johnson’s terms “We select aspects of our experience and represent them...We remake episodes of our experience, we choose objects which enable us to reflect upon experience. For many makers the act of making an object can be a piecing together of deeply felt experience as three-dimensional form” (1988: 139). However, Johnson’s rendering of narrative is markedly monologic, locating the maker’s individual experience as something to be revealed in an eventual object. This is in contrast to Rana’s or Evans’s more socially constructed approach.

### *2.8.2 Narrative as biography.*

In the general editor’s forward of *Pioneers of Modern Craft* (Coatts 1997) Greenhalgh suggests that “In the creation of the literature of any subject in the humanities, biography is a vital stage of development. Without it little else can really evolve.” (1997: xi). Each of the twelve chapters deals with a significant individual in 20th century crafts (two chapters deal with pairs of craftspeople whose work was very closely linked). The scheme reinforces the grand narrative of the individualistic and individuated practitioner. Indeed, such is the focus on such characters that glass and iron-working were omitted as suitable topics

because they were “more commonly operated and defined as ‘team’ activities” (Coatts 1997:xiii).

Greenhalgh supports his case for biography in referencing the canonical significance to Art History of Vasari’s *Lives of The Artists* (1550). Written almost contemporaneously, the metalworker Cellini’s autobiography became required reading for nineteenth-century enthusiasts of craftsmanship (see Betjemann 2011: 31-71). The ‘big book’ model of biography appears to have been adopted from its orthodoxy in publishing on art.

Harrod has identified that despite its radical premise, *Crafts* magazine quickly adopted a somewhat bucolic tone of “depoliticised and simplified biographical articles” (1999: 392). A trope emerged where one or two key characters would reject the implied pressures and compromises of ‘the rat race’ and embrace “all the simplicity of the workshop life, the steady pattern of the days”. (Marigold Coleman on Ray Finch. *Crafts* Nov Dec 1974: 34 in Harrod 1999: 392). This might be considered analogous to some of the themes identified by Rowley (1992: 166), noted earlier and together glossed as ‘crafts appreciation’.

Biography shares some characteristics of oral history accounts and researcher-elicited interviews. Halper and Douglas’s (2009) anthology of “Maker’s letters, reports...articles...lecture notes, and oral histories” are organised as “an anecdotal narrative, thematically arranged, that examines the post-World War II development of modern craft”. (ix). The book’s thematic arrangement neatly connotes something of a master narrative (Andrews & Bamberg 2004 and see 3.2 & 5.1) often found in life story interviews. Sections are headed (for example): integrating art and life, inheriting a path, training with masters, studying in the academy, starting a business. As key periods of a life, the sections compliment other pivotal moments reflected upon in ‘big story’ accounts such as significant exhibitions, awards and prizes, struggle and adversity, and revelatory engagements with a material or process. Similar patterns of events and themes can be seen in Jeffri (1992) and Mishler (1999).

Paul Thompson outlined the potential for oral history in the crafts: “if I think back to the 1960s...The objects of study were seen much more as detached objects, unconnected with the society in which they were produced and appreciated...any concern with people either as producers or consumers was marginal.” (1997:42). His view correlates with a *Crafts Horizons* review of 1965: “We think about craft as if it were objects, forgetting (that) it’s people and we are people reacting to

them.” (Richards cited in Koplos & Metcalf 2010: ix). The humanising imperative of life story research thus addresses the following: “The problem with art history and criticism is it lacks the smell of human beings”. (Kaneko undated cited in Koplos & Metcalf 2010: ix).

Methodological implications of retrospectively constructing stories are acknowledged by Thompson as he addresses “the social shaping of memory: how people forget crucial things in their past, and re-shape their memories of their experiences, and sometimes even invent memories” (Thompson 1997: 49). Such matters direct us to the ideological space between big and small story oriented narrative research (see 3.2) that might be used as a critical perspective of the ‘big book’ biography.

### *2.8.3 Narrative as promotion.*

Recent advice and counselling given to (particularly novice and early career) makers by organisations such as the Crafts Council and The Design Trust propose the maker presents themselves and their works in terms of narrative. Participants in the Crafts Council Hothouse business start-up scheme are encouraged to present the ‘story of their practice’ and the ‘story behind their work’. Those on the scheme are also required to write about their experiences and what they do on a collective blog. The University of Falmouth hosts a one-day workshop: The Business of Crafting: Exploring the Role of Narrative in Craft Promotion.

### *2.8.4 Positioning narrative as an appropriate response to the data and as a critical response the craft discourse.*

I have sketched the key aspects of craft’s narrative turn. In terms of this thesis a narratives approach is an appropriate response in two ways: as a response to the data, and to mobilise my critique of the crafts literature.

To expand:

- The participants show a disposition to use narrative in the data. Like many other fields, craft has turned to narrative: The data are concrete examples of narratives in practice.
- The thesis orients to narratives-in-interaction as a response to the data and to recognise social bases of understanding.
- It affords an alternative epistemic stance to the canonical modes of the crafts literature.
- Specifically, small stories research seeks to give voice to non-canonical, under-represented accounts, thus drawing together points 2 & 3.

By drawing together two aspects of the crafts literature, a critical case can be made for an orientation to narrative as a method and as an epistemological position through Bruner's (1986) conception of narrative understanding. The two aspects are the mode in which much of the discourse is written and the topical orthodoxy in the discourse of tacit knowledge.

The first aspect is mode. The contemporary crafts literature is typically organised around models of writing that emanate from the academy. This is of little surprise, as contemporary craft has been constituted to a great degree by institutional discursive forces. A great deal of writing has come from university art departments (for example Adamson 2007, 2010, Veiteberg 2005, Risatti 2007, papers in Harrod 1997, see 2.2). Contemporary craft emerged through discursive forces as a university subject during the 1970s and 80s following changes to the content of UK higher education art department curricula (2.1). The same institutions were also required to produce assessable research outcomes comparable to those of 'academic' university departments. The needs for craft to engage in language have been discussed, the result being that much writing on the crafts has more or less oriented to a natural-science mode of arguing for the truth-value of a given hypothesis. Bruner identifies this as the logico-scientific mode (1986: 10) as absolutely different to the narrative mode. The data show that narrative is used frequently (3.6), this distinction affords a break, a theoretical reason to loosen the narratives, as language-in-practice, from the canonical forms of the crafts discourse.

The second aspect is topical orthodoxy: I have discussed how an orthodoxy of tacit knowledge came to dominate particular representations of craft (Dormer 1994, 1997, see 2.5). This position has been elaborated and restated in the crafts

literature (Adamson 2010, Marchand 2016, Martin 2016) almost to the point of celebration or exoticism. This thesis resists and departs from such generalisations and recognises that many cultural practices experience problems with language (2.5). The orthodoxy that craft knowledge is tacit is simply to state that craft knowledge is difficult or impossible to inscribe or say and that it does not reside in sentences. Instead of being transferred or conferred through propositions, craft knowledge is accrued through practise and experience and can be characterised as an ongoing a-posteriori accumulation, i.e. of knowing through doing. It is a type of knowing that resides in and is accountable to lived experience; a craftsperson knows because of resemblance to life, to the particular. Through prior experience and contingent improvisation, new solutions and formulations to problems are deduced and arrived at through what is already known (see Marchand 2016).

Stated this way, craft knowledge bears comparison to Bruner's (1986: 11) reckoning of narrative as a distinct mode of knowing and understanding, where the ability to convince rests with a story's verisimilitude, i.e. how it convinces by analogy to experience. Bruner argues that the narrative mode is conceptually absolutely different to what he names the logico-scientific mode that "attempts to fulfil the ideal of formal mathematical system of description and explanation" (1986: 12) "The two...are irreducible to one another" (1986: 10). Bruner's presentation of narrative can frame an alternative to academic conventions, and a way of understanding craft knowledge.

## **2.9 Concluding remarks.**

In this chapter I have described how contemporary craft has been discursively produced through institutional forces (2.1). These forces have typically been 'top down' implementations of government policy from craft's advocating bodies, and the higher education system. A combination of introducing historical and theoretical studies to curricula, changes to education funding regimes, and attempting to align craft to fine arts cultural status meant craft, previously taught as practical skills, needed to more fully engage in language. Much of the emerging 'new' craft literature emanated from these institutions, principally the universities and the Crafts Council (2.2). A growing literature tended to sustain a limited range of etic perspectives that wrote *about* craft, instituting a structure of hegemonic narratives. Despite drawing the crafts closer to some theoretical

discourses, little account was taken of emic perspectives of craft (2.3). Two of the dominant themes in the literature appear discrepant, ironic, even. On the one hand, as part of the imperative to re-locate craft, significant amounts of language have been used to define, categorise, establish what craft is, (ascertain its identity) (2.4). On the other hand, having often been defined as the skilful manipulation of material with tools and hands, craft knowledge is reckoned to be tacit, other to, or separate from language (2.5). The result of craft practices' partition from language is a troubled relationship to theory; particularly to theoretical accounts of itself (2.6). As craft engaged with language, it did so principally through writing. Talk, as for anybody, constitutes and constructs much in a craftsperson's world and in 2.7 I discussed typical professional situations, the sorts of situations that do not feature in the literature. I concluded the chapter by showing various ways in which craft has engaged with narrative (2.8) and from this propose narrative research as an appropriate method and critical position to analyse talk, to reveal the marginalised voice of practice and show talk as an aspect of creative labour. I discuss the methodological approach in the next chapter.

However, a paradox arises in my view of the crafts literature vis-à-vis craft's identity. I have argued on the one hand that the literature constitutes a monolithic big-D discourse (Gee 1990), attempting to fix and establish histories and perspectives through a set of hegemonic narratives (Giroux et al 1996). And on the other hand, I show how craft has continually shifted its position in relation to tradition and modernity, and art and design, in fluid arrangements as various authors and institutions set out their cases. In fact, an institutional desire to show that craft is necessary to every pursuit and multivalent across culture means that craft, as an idea, is highly mobile. As a field in flux, with little confidence in its own overall identity, perhaps contemporary craft is unsuited as a venue to find the certainty of fixed, secure discreet identities within for its subjects. As a fluid and unstable landscape it is more suited to look at how 'subject positions' (Foucault 1969, Davies & Harré 1990) are effected and played out in communicative practice. This is consistent with small story research's orientation to positioning.

The data events are situations where all present are operating in a professional context. The introductory sections of the thesis refer to the key participants collectively as 'contemporary craft practitioners'. This is of course an identity I have ascribed to them as I have sought to delineate the terms of the thesis. The term exists 'out there' in the discourses around craft but the question is whether it



has any relevance in the data. Any one of the participants is only a contemporary crafts practitioner by dint of me naming them as such for my purposes at this moment.

I suggest that contemporary craft lacks historical stability and this has implications for those in its orbit. Contemporary craft has barely coalesced in temporal terms, many of those working when the Crafts Council and Crafts Magazine were launched (Richard Slee, Allison Britton, Michael Rowe, Ann Sutton, and Susanna Heron, for example) are still practicing and/or teaching. In addition, craft's boundaries, locations and purposes are still contested (Chapter 2). There is therefore very little in the way of what might be thought of as a historicised identity anchor or centre. And yet I have argued there exists a range of hegemonic narratives that to some extent prescribe crafts practitioners' professional lives. If viewed as an aspect of modernity, part of contemporary craft's role has been the rejection of the historicised traditions that can offer stability and a sense of identity and is a field in flux.

Originality and novelty are to one degree or another expected of someone in the participants' positions, it is part of the 'job description' of being a creative worker. They have few stable identity hooks available as they are meant to be change-makers and innovators and this is an identity in itself. Nonetheless, the participants thus work in a field with little history, and whose identity shifts. The participants also maintain careers with multiple bases, mainly studio-work and teaching, mainly. These might cohere but equally they might conflict. Fewer models of coherence "historically continuous and unitary" (Davies & Harré 1990) would appear to be attainable. In addition it is argued that fragmentation of postmodern life, (Giddens 1984, Kraus 2006) has led to uncertainty vis-à-vis conventionalised and social roles as transmitted through hegemonic narratives. Kraus suggests "when social and personal coherence are endangered, storytelling may be a superficial remedy. It is suspected to offer an ideologically based foreclosure for dissociated subjects and dissociative social tendencies. Narratives help to create ready-made coherence" (Kraus 2006: 105-6).

### **Chapter 3. Small stories in practice: performing the professional self through positioning and categorisation.**

#### **3.0 Introduction and structure of the chapter.**

In this chapter I set out the methodological framework of the thesis. After briefly summarising the main argument of chapter two, I discuss in the first part of the chapter the particular language analysis approaches that I adopt. In the second part I discuss ethnography including my role as a practitioner researcher; and in the third part the data: its collection and selection.

The thesis is rooted in language analysis. The review of the crafts literature serves to establish, as I see it, the problem, and language analysis provides a plausible corrective to the problem. In chapter two I showed that contemporary craft is a product of discursive forces. Predominantly institutional forces that shaped craft through educational and policy reforms. A literature grew from these institutions, notably the universities and the Crafts Council, tending to sustain particular etic perspectives.

A paradox arose within the literature. Two of its key themes appear discrepant, ironic even. On the one hand, a durational topic of argument and discussion concerned itself with what craft 'is', aiming to establish a cultural identity for craft through discourse. On the other hand, an equally stubborn topic, a hegemony of tacit knowledge, maintains a schism between craft practice and language. The hegemony of tacit knowledge settles too readily on the whole of a craftsperson's epistemic stance being based on practical knowledge. My position is that knowing how to make things, while central and particular to most definitions of craft-making is not the whole of 'craft knowledge'. The hegemony of tacit knowledge meant that as craft's discourses grew, many aspects of crafts practice were partitioned from language.

Craft, as a construct, is made of language, a construct that has made much of trying to turn making into writing. My argument is made in chapter two by reviewing the *written* discourses that have structured craft. The distinction that I make in 2.7 is that language use in professional practice is more often than not *spoken*. By analysing an episode of spoken interaction between crafts professionals, I show how language is used in concrete, situated contexts.

Given that my focus is on spoken language use as an aspect of craft practices, the analytical tools I draw on are grounded in language as situated practice and interaction. In the first part of this chapter I discuss an analytical framework that draws together performance (Duranti 1997, Baumann & Briggs 1990), interactional narratives (Andrews et al 2008, De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012), small story research (Bamberg 2006, Georgakopoulou 2007), membership categorisation (Housley & Fitzgerald 2015), and positioning (Bamberg 1997). These theoretical approaches are shown to inform each other and combine as an integrated set of methods.

I proceed by framing the episode of spoken interaction as a performance, given that the participants are presenting themselves in a professional context, performing a version of 'who I am'. These are people who, as argued in chapter two, are to some degree shaped by the overarching discourses of education and work lives. But by attending to local discourse, more nuanced accounts of self and experience can be heard. This brings to the fore something that cuts across all aspects of the theoretical approach: how master narratives and local voices are entwined. The analysis shows how master narratives might bring with them assumptions but they can equally be used as a resource by speakers to offer alternative discursive constructions.

Within the event I isolate narratives within the context of story-telling as performance. This is because narratives offer an empirical and a distinct critical perspective. Selecting narrative is a response to 1) what is seen in the data and 2) the conditions outlined in chapter two (see 2.8).

Narrative research has a long concern with identity. Identity is made relevant in this research at two levels: firstly, the macro concern with definitions in the crafts literature, and secondly, the micro concern of presenting the self in local contexts. To some extent this statement mirrors the condition noted in the previous paragraph, in that it reflects a simultaneity of master narrative and local voices. I orient to the type of narrative research which has argued for identity as interactionally done (performed) rather than as detached constructions. The shift to situated, more process-based conceptualisations of narrative embraces small stories research. As a research perspective, small stories account for the literally small fragments of narrative in the data and they offer a critical position for attending to under-represented accounts.

Bamberg's (1997) conceptualisation of positioning in narrative affords a view of local, relatively fine-grain interactional work, but also how local presentations fit to larger contexts. Positioning is accomplished more-or-less hand-in-hand through categorisation. Categorisation, and hence positioning, is shown in the analysis to be done at two levels: firstly, explicit 'labelling' of self and others, but in more nuanced ways at a second symbolic level, as categories are shown to index certain behaviours, expectations, and cultural phenomena.

Performance as a contextually embedded social practice thus embraces the contingent, mutable work done in categorisation and positioning as an aspect of telling small stories in interaction.

### **3.1 Performance**

A starting point of this thesis is that the spoken local discourses of crafts practitioners have received sparse attention in the crafts literature and that orthodox views in the craft literature maintain a schism between language and craft practice (Chapter 2). My point of departure has been that spoken language-in-use is a fundamentally different entity to the structuring textual presence of language in crafts discourse and resonates with Hanks's view that "Artistic discourse is viewed as emergent in the events in which it is realised. No longer defined by a canonical written text, it is a kind of practice." (Hanks 1996: 191).

In this section I outline how a performance-oriented approach to analysis informs an understanding of what is going on in the gallery conversations. I justify why these events can be thought of as performances and discuss how performance resides in talk-in-interaction. My research position seeks to show the performance aspects of small stories, which are interactionally occasioned, fragmentary, sometimes mundane narratives told as part of staging 'who I am' as a practice-based enterprise.

To be clear, I understand performance as it has been used in the linguistic anthropology tradition. Duranti situates linguistic anthropology's most particular interest in performance in a 'third sense' of the term. (He locates the first sense in a Chomskian sense of performance of the linguistic system, and the second sense in Austin's 'doing things with words', performative verbs). The third sense pertains to "folklore studies, poetics, and more generally, the arts...Performance in this sense refers to a domain of human action where special attention is given

to the ways in which communicative acts are executed” (Duranti 1997: 15). Or: “Performance is language as actual utterance” (Hanks 1996: 73). From a linguistic anthropology perspective, Duranti (1997: 16) notes Goffman’s (1981) use of dramaturgic metaphors such as actor, backstage, and stage in his accounting for self-presentation.

I proceed from a general Goffmanian interpretation of the data events to make the case for them being staged, as the participants are not merely “giving information but giving shows” (Goffman 1974: 508 in Ives & Juswick 2015: 74). I then work through Bauman (1975), Bauman & Briggs (1990), Hymes (1974), Duranti (1997), and Hanks (1996) to make a case for this type of talk being thought of in performance terms. I also briefly discuss ethnopoetics as an approach that can fit within and reinforce a performance perspective.

A performance approach situates talk socially and physically, drawing on Hymes’s focus on the ‘event’ as an argument to examine communication as an ethnographic project rather than a linguistic project (See Creese 2008: 230). This brings attention to the “performance situation, involving performer, art form, audience, and setting” (Bauman 1975: 290). Bauman argued that studies of performance thus far (i.e. into the 1960s) had been “text-centred”. An event-centred approach also brings into focus the broader interaction framework (Goffman) rather than merely the solo narrator. Hanks draws attention to Hymes’ and Bauman’s orientation to actions, rather than to texts: “what unifies verbal art is not the properties of the language but instead *how the language is actually delivered in the uttering.*” (Hanks 1996: 191 emphasis in original).

The term ‘performance’ might bring with it the presupposition of grand drama and aesthetic enactment. A great many of the studies of performance have focussed on storytelling and have emphasised more-or-less highly-tellable narratives-as-entertainment (Bauman 1986) or the ritualistic enacted retelling and transmission of folk tales (Bauman 1986, Hymes 1981). But Duranti points toward everyday moments of talk-as-performance: “performance can also describe what is often found in the most ordinary of encounters, when social actors exhibit a particular attention to the skills in the delivery of a message”. (1997: 16). Bauman defines the performative mode as embracing an assumption of accountability and responsibility of competent communicative skills *beyond referential content* on the part of the speaker to their audience (1975: 293) and argues for a renaming of his focus of attention as ‘verbal art’: “Thus conceived, a performance is a mode

of language use, a way of speaking. The implication of such a concept for a theory of verbal art is this: it is no longer necessary to begin with artful texts, identified on independent formal grounds and then reinjected into situations of use, in order to conceptualise verbal art in communicative terms. Rather, in terms of the approach being developed here, performance becomes constitutive of the domain of verbal art as spoken communication" (1975: 293). Bauman thus locates verbal art in 'ordinary' spoken interaction, excising pre-determined value-judgements of what is either artful or poetic. Hymes, like Duranti is clear "it also applies to conversation in daily life" (1974: 55). Performance is a type of practice embedded in context, not a pre-determined style. "By this definition even a discourse lacking stylistic elaboration can become part of art if it is delivered in the right way. That way is called 'performance', a mode of action, not a kind of text" (Hanks 1996: 190).

Hymes', Hanks' and Bauman's approaches to performance seek to prioritise the physical nature of telling over and above the textual representation as the analytical focus. Much performance and ethnopoetic analysis of narratives has tended toward researcher-elicited stories, folk-story and myth narrating (Bauman 1986, Hymes 1981), often monologic tellings. In other words, they resemble 'big stories' (3.2). Considered as a podium event (Goffman 1981) the key participants have relatively strong floor-holding rights and broadly speaking the visitors have come to hear what the exhibiting artists have to say. I suggest, therefore, that the context is congruent with a relatively weak necessity for performance. Not, that the key participants aren't, as I describe above, involved in an ongoing, continuous presentation of their professional selves, but that high levels of dramatic strategies are not always required in order to do this. Bauman has claimed that "verbal art may be culturally defined as varying in intensity" (1975: 297), that "performance is not an all or nothing quality of narratives but a continuum from sustained full performance to a fleeting breakthrough into performance" (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: 64).

Recognising the relevance of 'ordinary talk' in this way, and attending to embeddedness in interactional situations resonates with similar positions held by narrative analysis and small story research (3.2). "Local forms of knowledge are embodied in the content of stories: what stories are about, the way in which characters act, the settings in which events take place, but also their linguistic organisation, rhetorical devices and poetic power" (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: 57). Bauman claims that performance affords the possibility of the narrator

micro-structuring participants' expectations by enhancing their experience and involvement. By lodging argument in the specificities of listeners' memories through mundane and general touchstones, using general, recognisable, mundane references, figures, and objects, the key participants can appeal to a range of interlocutors by making available memories, and allusions to them specifically. Such touchstones can be seen in the analysis, ranging, for example from characterisations in stories relevant to the professional context (Chapters 5 & 6), to locally understood references to materials and places (Chapter 7) This enhances the power of the argument being lodged through performed stories. Bauman's focus on the mundane, and involving listeners, enables a link to aspects of small story research in interactional constructions and the everyday.

A way of showing quite explicitly the way that spoken language is used as a performance is by adopting methods from ethnopoetics. Ethnopoetics aligns to a performance perspective because its aim is to reveal the organisation of spoken language around aesthetic structure rather than grammarian structure. Much ethnopoetic work has concerned itself with recovering marginalised narrative forms. Hymes (1981, 1998) and Tedlock (1983) sought to reposition 'lost' oral and verbal traditions of native North American cultures as a political act of reconstitution. In Hymes' view, the implicit organisation of lines and stanzas informs the content of what is told. Features such as discourse markers, conjunctions, repetition and parallelisms structure the 'text' into lines and stanzas. Hymes referred to this as "equivalence" (see Blommaert 2007: 216). These structures display cultural and indexical logic, thus revealing emic organisation. Explicit features and markers are discussed as part of chapter six.

De Fina & Georgakopoulou observe that: "applications of ethnopoetic analysis to corpora or texts that are not taken from traditional or preliterate cultures are rare, precisely because of the central claim that this type of structure is typical of cultures that strongly rely on verbal communication" (2012: 41). But Blommaert (2007) sees in ethnopoetics an approach that can be applied "to data in which different systems of meaning-making meet" (2007: 214). Like Gee (1986) Blommaert has used ethnopoetic approaches to similar ends on contemporaneous data. Both employ poetic devices, such as repetition and parallelisms, to show how marginalised voices speak in the face of hegemonic expectations of literacy: The observable poetic devices can override orthodox measures of communicative competence in narrative (impoverished vocabulary, disfluency, awkward grammar) but are "overlaid by a crystal-clear narrative

structure” vis-à-vis its internal poetic structure (Blommaert 2007: 219).

Performance features, including ethnopoetic analysis, can reveal how the participants artfully position themselves and account for experiences and critical positions differentiated to the norms of academic writing.

The data events are thus framed as performance with a particular focus, through the literature, on storytelling: “Since narration is all about performance – the staging of a presentation of self” (Cortazzi 1993: 40). Having established narrative as a critical and empirical response in 2.8, I now turn to how narrative research addresses the concerns of the thesis.

### **3.2 Narratives in practice and small stories.**

From the discussion on performance it is clear that narratives are an integrated aspect of performance (Bauman 1986, Duranti 1997: 15). As situated events, performances are interactional encounters, accordingly I orient to an interactional, practice-based approach to narrative. As a response to what is seen in the data, and as a critical position, I refine this stance toward small stories. In chapter two I set out an argument using Bruner (1986), stating that narrative research is an appropriate approach at two levels: firstly to the data, and secondly to my critique of the crafts literature. To recap:

- The participants show a disposition to use narrative in the data. Like many other fields, craft has turned to narrative. The data are concrete examples of narratives in practice.
- The thesis orients to narratives-in-interaction as a response to the data and to recognise social bases of understanding.
- It affords an alternative epistemic stance to the canonical modes of the crafts literature.
- Specifically, small stories research seeks to give voice to non-canonical, under-represented accounts, thus drawing together points 2 & 3.

Narrative analysis can therefore offer an alternative perspective on hegemonic positions in the crafts discourse through mode and via topic (2.9).

The data come from a series of public fora in which the key participants discussed the work they were exhibiting at a London gallery. The talks were ‘naturally occurring’ insofar as they were intended by the exhibitors to be conversations rather than interviews or lectures. Accordingly, this research



orients to what Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou call “A third form of narrative research...the co-constructed narratives that develop, for instance in conversations between people...how personal stories get built up through the conversational sequences in people’s talk” (2008: 5-6). This is distinct from the dominant types of narrative in the craft literature, often researcher-elicited, either as big-book biographic studies or as interviews (e.g. Halper & Douglas 2009, Bernabei 2011). These approaches come under the umbrella of paradigmatic narrative analysis whose “purpose is to see how respondents in interviews impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives.” (Riessman 1993: 2 and see Clandlin & Connelly 2000). The point is not to criticise such approaches but rather to highlight that this research engages with narratives as a contextualised social phenomenon.

Interest in narratives-in-interaction evolved as a critical departure from isolated, decontextualised texts. As Potter writes: “The analysis of narratives in the human and social sciences has mostly ignored the interactional business that people might be doing in telling them.” (1997: 265). A critique also made by Norrick: “Labov & Waletzky treat oral narrative as a decontextualized phenomenon rather than a conversational strategy for accomplishing some interactional end” (Norrick 2000: 1-2), thus highlighting the presupposed roles of interviewer and respondent in Riessman’s view that “tends to divide participants into a teller with strong floor holding rights and a recipient.” (Georgakopoulou 2006: 237). Canonically, stories are structurally pre-disposed to follow an archetypal form of abstract, orientation, complicating action, resolution, evaluation, and coda (Labov, 1972). Progressing from Potter, Georgakopoulou writes: “Researchers have frequently noted that the narratives told outside research interviews depart significantly from the above qualities” (2006: 237). Ochs & Capps argued that narratives digressing from this formal canonical structure tend to be overlooked and disregarded in narrative research and greater attention should be paid to “less polished, less coherent narratives that pervade ordinary social encounters and are a hallmark of the human condition” (2001 in De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: 115-116).

Narratives emerged within ongoing talk at the events rather than as the product of researcher-elicitation, “as an embedded unit, enmeshed in local business, as opposed to being free-standing and detachable” (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: 44). This leads to the idea that story-telling does not occur in a vacuum, a story is told because other people might be listening and there is a discernible need to tell the story. Even though a story might on the face of it be told by one

person, it is shaped and told in a particular way because of its situatedness. Narrative-in-interaction is embedded in its context and is a “conversational strategy for accomplishing some interactional end” (Norrick 2000: 2). An interactional end congruent with performance is the presentation of professional self to others as an aspect of artistic labour; for the moment I gloss this under the catch-all of identity.

Identity has been a central concern of narrative research. See for example Antaki & Widdicombe 1998, De Fina, Schiffrin & Bamberg 2006, Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou 2008, Bamberg 1997, Benwell & Stokoe 2006 chapter 4, De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012 chapter 6, and Bamberg 2011. Identity has also been of central concern to the crafts (2.4).

Identity, from a biographical point of view, has normatively been conceptualised as a long term project more or less consistent with big story experience-recall. A ‘worthwhile’ life story is constructed with the aid of post-event reflection to create a sense of self commensurate with the stories we tell (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: 159-160). These stories are unloaded in social contexts presenting a coherent, though not necessarily unconflicted persona. They typically draw on either ‘event’, or ‘experience’ narratives (Andrews et al 2008: 5). ‘Event’ elicitation searches for details of particular bounded events that the narrator lived through, while ‘experience’ elicitation seeks to more-or-less assemble a long term historiography, typically the life-story from a range of sources. Of course it is quite possible that an event or experience might be the topic of any given interactionally occasioned narrative. Topic-type is not mutually exclusive, what is at question in terms of defining interactional narratives is the method of elicitation or process of occasioning. (Andrews et al 2008: 5, Georgakopoulou 2006, 2007: 2-5). Focussing on how narratives are told *amongst* people as interactional accomplishments can bring focus to how knowledge and understanding can be socially constructed. It is a position that offers something different to the forms of narrative that appear in the craft literature. I now outline my move toward small stories. Small stories exemplify how identity as displayed by a speaker has shifted away from the idea of a monologically determined isolated self, toward a process of how ‘who we are’ is done in the everyday routines of being with others (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998: 1-15 Zimmerman 1998).

### 3.2.1 *Small stories.*

Although showing a disposition to work with narrative in the data, the participants tend toward small narrative fragments embedded in interactional business, rather than longer episodes of storytelling. The participants recall past experiences, emerging as literally small fragments during the course of talk often to back up, reify, or vivify the ongoing conversational topic. This lays out a literal reason to orient toward small story research (Bamberg 2004, 2007, 2007 Georgakopoulou 2006, 2007 Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008) but there is also a critical and analytical reason. To be sure, small stories are literally “usually very short” (Bamberg 2006: 63). But additionally, “On a metaphorical level though, the term ‘small stories’ is selected as an antidote formulation to a longstanding tradition of ‘big stories’ (cf. ‘grand narratives’, Lyotard 1984): it locates a level and even an aesthetic for the identification and analysis of narrative, the smallness of talk, where fleeting moments of narrative orientation to the world (Hymes 1996) can easily be missed out on by an analytical lens which only looks out for fully-fledged stories.” (Georgakopoulou 2007: vii). It is this critical stance, small story research’s commitment to bringing to the fore “under-represented narrative activities” (Georgakopoulou 2007: 2) that is consistent with my critique of the crafts literature.

There is a similarity in the aims of small story research to interrogate “the direction of narrative analysis, creating notions of a narrative canon and orthodoxy, that is, what constitutes a story, a good story, a story worth analysing” (Georgakopoulou 2006: 236) and what has constituted the ‘stories worth telling’ as the formative elements of the crafts canon and orthodoxy.

I draw on small stories’ critical stance as a corrective to the grand narratives of the crafts discourse (2.3 – 2.6) and the big stories of its normative uses of narrative (2.8). I also draw on small stories’ (along with performance and interactional narrative generally) commitment to social situatedness. But I recognise these small stories are entwined with big stories rather than being mutually-exclusive, and that small and big stories can be mutually-shaping. The thesis depends, to some degree, on the relationship between big stories and small stories, hegemonic narratives and counter narratives, institutional discourses and local talk: all of which rely on contrasts of scale. I expand below, but in chapter five locally enacted small stories simultaneously contradict and rely

on hegemonic narratives, while in chapter seven small stories index locally relevant aspects of the participants' 'larger' biographies.

I suggest that some of the ways in which small stories are used can be thought of as counter narratives (Giroux et al 1996, Bamberg 2004). The analysis shows how small stories of prior events implicate and index orthodox expectations, and at the same time allow the speaker to position themselves as variant. Situating themselves in narratives, and using narratives to exemplify argument or points of view "acting and interacting in a social world with others that is open to interpretation and variation can serve as an excellent tool to present one's own claims to what is valued and relevant" (Bamberg 2004: 357). In attending to local relevance and detail, small stories register greater heft as a positioning tool than their literal scale might suggest.

I use the term 'hegemonic narrative' to characterise the overarching describing and explaining textual structures in the crafts canon. The term hegemonic narrative is used as a second, or local order of Grand Narrative (Lyotard 1984) by Giroux, Lankshear, McLaren, and Peters (1996: 2). Lyotard's model "spoke of the enlightenment project or the inevitable march toward socialism; they are seen as narratives that legitimate the authority of institutions that claim to have a monopoly of truth" (Macey 2000: 236), an order of magnitude beyond the relatively local affairs of contemporary craft. Therefore I adopt the term hegemonic narrative as a more locally available model to provide the backdrop against the "little stories of those individuals and groups whose knowledges and histories have been marginalised, excluded, subjugated, or forgotten in the telling of official narratives" (Giroux et al 1996: 2).

Counter narratives are compatible with Georgakopoulou's view that small stories can be "an epistemology...an ideological standpoint" (2014: 10). Georgakopoulou holds that "small stories research bring(s) to the fore untold, devalued and discarded stories" (2014: 9) revealing "unseen and unheard moments of diversity within prevailing mega-narratives" (Olson & Craig 2009 in Georgakopoulou 2014: 9).

Bamberg discusses the scalar range of "master narratives", at one extent, the inescapable "grand recits or metanarratives (that) explain how much the modern mind is engulfed in pre-existent sociocultural forms of interpretation" (2004: 360) and at the other extent more available "General cultural expectations" embedded in "event chains (story lines)" (2004: 359-60). In these the narrator can position

themselves (and others) as a character to present individual experience. Bamberg reminds us that scale is not binary, but that locally available and more global frames are interwoven. In other words, talk can reveal complexes of intertextual relevancies at different horizons (Baumann & Briggs 1990). Bamberg alerts us to the double-bind that “master narratives surely constrain and delineate the agency of subjects...however it should not be forgotten that these master narratives also give guidance and direction” (2004: 360): In the case of this research, being a craftsperson within certain parameters or frames of professional norms, conduct, and competencies.

### *3.2.2 Small and big stories.*

Methodological differences between big and small stories are discussed in Bamberg (2006, 2007), Georgakopoulou & Bamberg (2005), Georgakopoulou (2006, 2007 a & b), Helsig (2010), Freeman (2007). The analysis shows that ‘events’, more usually attributed to big stories, are used as resources in small stories. This is not unusual (Andrews et al 2008: 7-8), but as a qualification I show that they are used in narrative reflection (Chapter 5). Narrative reflection is a methodological difference between big and small stories, as I outline here:

Paradigmatic of big stories is a temporal (and frequently spatial) distance between the storyworld and the narrating world, while small stories are embedded within the flow of local business, in ‘the now’ of interaction. The temporal and/or spatial distancing probable in telling a big story is argued to offer the opportunity for the teller to review things from afar. Making use of this distance, the narrator is able to gather and assemble resources. This “creates opportunities for understanding that are not available in the immediacy of the moment” (Freeman 2007:155). Helsig expands: “Big story research...traditionally deals with narratives that are recounted from a vantage point enabling the narrator to reflect on an event or experience and to thereby engage in a process of meaning-making” (2010:3). This follows from Goffman’s point that: “a full scale story requires that the speaker remove himself for the telling’s duration from the alignment he would maintain in ordinary conversational give and take” (1981:152).

This is the way that narrative is typically presented in the crafts discourse, either as researcher-elicited interviews or as (auto)biography. A small stories perspective argues that the “real stories of our lived lives” (Bamberg 2004: 356) are “easily missed by a lens that only looks out for fully fledged stories” (Georgakopoulou 2007:146).

The argument is made that through interactional detachment and narrative distance, irregularities might be smoothed over in the narrating world of a big story, “require(ing) a somewhat conscious or at least analytic focus on consistencies across time, places, and actions” (Bamberg 2004:355 and see Helsig 2010: 3).

Analysis shows that there are moments in the data where there is considerable spatial and/or temporal distance between the narrating and story worlds, as per big stories, yet the narratives are also clearly occasioned as part of the local interactional business, as per small stories (Chapters 5, 6, & 7). Past events are reflected upon but instead of the narrator bringing some kind of “analytic focus” to past events and the (big) story (Bamberg 2004:355), the small stories in the data bring analytic focus to the narrating world: They play their part in ongoing argumentation, exemplification, and critique. So, whereas Bamberg observes that through a big story’s telling, the narrated world is presented with tidy coherence, I note that small story accounts pay less attention to tidying up a fragmented narrated world, rather, their “interactional end” (Norrick 2000: 2) of presenting the professional self appears to be bringing coherence and “analytic focus” to the *narrating* world.

### **3.3 Positioning.**

Small stories are representative of a shift toward practice- and process-oriented narrative research. How identities are studied has moved from the telling of self as an event that might be distinct or separable from the interactional context, to the telling of self as an integrated hand-in-hand aspect of doing interaction.

Positioning therefore fits within narratives-in-interaction. Greater attention is paid to what identities are made relevant in interaction rather than finding ways of fitting actors to pre-existing types. This isn’t to say that macro or essentialist identities suddenly become invalid, it is more a question of what is made valid in the situation by actors: “Of course people do have recourse to the more classical kinds of identity...they are identities that require attention...but only when made

so by participants in interactions”, “people work up and resist identities in indexical, creative, and unexpected ways.” (Antaki & Widdicombe 1998: 14 see also De Fina 2015 351-368). Blommaert (2005: 209-10) makes explicit the link between positioning as an empirically accountable micro-order process and a Goffmanian take on performing the self through interaction. The conceptually static notion of identity is, for interactional perspectives, better rendered through the more fluid notion of positioning. Emphasising the spatial nature of positioning as a metaphor aids the conceptualisation of social subjects taking up positions as an aspect of discursive forces and communicative practices (Widdicombe 1998: 200).

Attributed to Davies and Harré, who had taken their lead from Foucault’s ‘subject positions’ (1969), positioning is an approach to identity that proceeds from a post-structuralist assessment of: “the recognition of the force of discursive practices, the ways in which people are positioned through those practices and the way in which the individuals’ subjectivity is generated through the learning and use of certain discursive practices” (1990: 44). Positioning is interactionally done, to others and the self, in a continuous manner. “Not part of a linear non-contradictory autobiography, but rather, the cumulative fragments of a lived autobiography” (Davies & Harré 1990). Therefore “Positions are dynamic, emergent, and possibly subject to change over the course of an interactional episode” (Deppermann 2013: 3 after Davies & Harré 1990:53) and congruent with an interactional view on narrative.

As an analytical framework, positioning as particularised within narrative is specifically addressed by Bamberg (1997). Bamberg’s perspective is locally situated “at a particular occasion in the form of a particular story” (1997: 335) and focusses on its situatedness vis-à-vis the relationship between the teller and the audience. Bamberg also offers a break with canonical stories of the self in that his approach to positioning implicitly involves ‘the other(s)’ in any story or narration (1997:342).

Bamberg makes use of narrative’s claim on spatial and temporal multiplicities in their telling. By focussing on the narrating domain and the narrated domain being analytically separable, he brings attention to the possibility of multiple presentations of self and others. His model enables a discussion of variance and cohesion across contexts. Bamberg proposes an analytical schema of three levels. At level one the analysis is of characters’ positions as told in the story. At

level two attention switches to how the narrator positions themselves to their hearers. Beyond the immediate cotext (Titscher et al 2000: 238), Bamberg posits a third level that asks how levels one and two might combine to contribute to a more macro, unitary identity that transcends the immediate situation.

These positions might be remote from immediate interaction, being somewhere on an “infinite regress” (Baumann & Briggs 1990: 68), suggesting portability across discourse contexts and feasibly relative to master or hegemonic narratives: “These claims...bespeak(s) a discourse type that searches across past events...to make claims of a more decontextual sort.” (Bamberg 1997: 341). Or put another way, while levels one and two might reveal (in)consistencies and (dis)continuities in characterisations in the narrative situation, level three might reveal “Global situatedness...referencing and orientation to social positions and discourses above and beyond the here and now.” (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008: 3).

Bamberg’s conceptualisation of a level three identity is relevant to the research in two ways. Firstly, my position as a participant researcher brings with it prior knowledge of the participants. I might be aware of factors that can contribute to broader identity constructions and I need to be conscious of the interplay between those and locally-made emic representations. And in a sense this fits with a second point suggested through the crafts literature review, that of craft’s simultaneously monolithic yet mutable attitude to self-identity. So, for this research, the notion that Bamberg’s enquires into a third level of positioning breaks with an ethnomethodological (EM) and conversation analytic (CA) (approaches that mobilised both narratives-in-interaction and categorisation) perspective is of little concern. In a sense, part of the point of chapter two was to show how relevant institutional contexts are to shaping local interaction i.e. forces outside the immediate discourse context.

The question that draws these two points together is: what transport might exist between the local and more distant discourse contexts? Level three suggests an analyst’s need for more data or knowledge of the scene, and/or a greater part for the analyst’s interpretation. Bamberg’s level three, then, bridges the gap between EM/CA approaches that commit wholly to the text and methods that might ascribe pre-existing social categories to actors by dint of ethnographic knowledge (see De Fina 2013). Keying into broader discourse contexts, variously, big-D Discourses (Gee 1999), master narratives (Bamberg 2004), hegemonic



narratives (Giroux et al 1996) is an aspect of the analysis. In Chapter five I argue that some of the participants talk against the grain by invoking master narratives in small stories. This is against the background of chapter two, where my point is that a prototypical contemporary craft practitioner is to some extent discursively shaped by an education system and institutional rhetoric. Similarly, there are parts of the analysis that draw on more particular cultural knowledge amongst the participants as I discuss what is indexed through shared material resources (Chapter 6).

The intention is to work across methods as per small stories' "synthesis of frameworks" (Georgakopoulou 2014: 2). Within small stories I have thus far discussed some of the implications of the participants staging their professional selves through positioning. One of the ways in which positioning is accomplished in the data is by categorisation and I turn to this in the next section.

### **3.4 Categorisation.**

Categorisation analysis can work hand-in-hand with positioning as it occurs in talk, showing the way a particular image of the professional landscape is built up and presented, including how the participants fit in that landscape. Categorisation is shown to be used in various ways across the analytical chapters, exhibiting a range of interactional pragmatic functions. This extends to what conducts, rights, and responsibilities categories can index.

- Categories are used as more or less explicit references. Chapter four.
- Categories index shared histories, professional phenomena, and infer particular conduct and expectations. These enable affiliation and alignment amongst the interlocutors. Chapters four & five.
- Categorisation both enables and makes explicit the event as a type of performance. This is observable in lexical variation, how people are categorised differently through a story's retelling. Chapter six.
- Categorisation extends to how the physical world is represented. Material resources enable the circulation of shared histories, enable individual's positioning, and group affiliation. Chapter seven.

Positioning offers a method that shows *what* people are doing, categorisation reinforces the interpretation by showing in a concrete way some of *how* it is done through local lexical choices. Membership categorisation analysis makes real the

emic, locally-relevant ascriptions that positioning uses as its departure from essentialist identity research. “MCA gives researchers with a primary interest in categorical or topical (e.g. gender sexuality, ethnicity, identity), rather than sequential issues an empirically tractable method for studying those issues” (Stokoe 2012: 278).

Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA), as evolved by Sacks (1972) (and see Lepper 2000, Housley & Fitzgerald 2015, Schegloff 2007) is rooted in ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1974, Turner 1974). The approach holds that categories become relevant as worked up minimally as pairs that fit together in ‘common sense’ descriptions of the world to become ‘devices’. A basic device might consist of ‘child’ and ‘adult’; this could however, fit within a greater complex such as ‘mother’, ‘father’, ‘son’, ‘daughter’. A category is not exclusive, ‘mother’ can similarly fit with ‘childless’ or ‘pregnant’. Sacks’ claim was that the analyst, by building up knowledge of local ascriptions, can start to understand warrantable practices and qualities subscribed to in local discourses. Initially intended to describe classifications of people, MCA has embraced non-human categories, types of objects and cultural phenomena: music styles, transport types, social systems, or institutions for example (Hester & Eglin 1997: 3).

MCA does not present a fully resolved toolkit, but is rather a “collection of observations” (Fitzgerald & Housley 2015: 6). Stokoe (2012) claimed that Lepper (2000) was the only text then available that offered a ‘how to’ for the approach. This apparent looseness has prompted criticisms of methodological laxity (see Stokoe 2012, Pomerantz & Mandelbaum 2005). In response, Fitzgerald argues that MCA has more to offer, and more to gain, by operating alongside other language research pursuits, making more of its “analytic flexibility and hence its potential relevance to any discipline interested in aspects of identity and social knowledge” (Fitzgerald 2012: 307). MCA can be “profoundly simple” (Fitzgerald 2012: 308), thus aiding its multivalency.

How Fitzgerald develops his argument is relevant to the thesis: I claim that much is going on, sometimes simultaneously, in my data. This is one of the reasons why I have selected a focussed piece of data and in some cases worked back over the same excerpts (3.6). Fitzgerald cites Sacks, making the case that talk is layered, not merely sequential: “So the surface is thick and not just serial. Which is to say that a given object might turn out to be put together in terms of several types of organization” (Sacks 1995, vol. II: 561 in Fitzgerald). Or “Conceiving of

members' category work within an inextricably entwined multi-layered sequence that permeates multiple layers of participant orientation and interactional tasks" (Housley & Fitzgerald 2015: 10-11). Showing how categorisation can reveal the depth of activity in a piece of talk requires slowing down and working on relatively small data.

Through referencing explicit categories, speakers build up networks of (dis)affiliated categories in their talk to describe and structure experiences and situations at a local level. While positioning is most explicitly done in the data through making relevant or available categories (Chapter 4) and "The criteria for membership into these categories or the social consequences of belonging to them are openly discussed and contested" (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: 176), other positioning is accomplished via "institutionalised intelligibility" Wetherell (1998: 394). These references are indexed to the participants' longer term experiences and contexts. They are implicit, sometimes tacitly understood, behaviours, responsibilities, rights, and obligations. When imbricated with categorisation work they are considered as category-bound activities or predicates.

This is of relevance to the positioning work analysed in chapters five, six, & seven where "a great deal of identity work is done much more indirectly, through the use of symbolic processes." (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: 176). Or put another way, "The hallmark of positioning, however, is to recover how positions are invoked by more implicit indexical practices." (Deppermann 2015: 383).

By deploying categories, the means are provided for speakers to represent and make sense through 'predicates'. By categorising, other cultural information is implied, inferred and made available, the view being that particular categories come with particular ways of being and doing such as activities, obligations, rights, knowledge, and competencies (Hester & Eglin 1997: 5, Lepper 2000: 32-34). For example, categorising someone as either a university lecturer, a cyclist, a single mum, or a football fan does more than merely label but also implies that the person conducts themselves in particular ways and engages in certain activities. Predicates become locally enacted, tacitly understood regimes of implied conduct that can build (dis)affiliation amongst speakers. Lexical choice, and the consequent locally available cultural knowledge, enable self and other positioning in local discourse. Uttering and acting upon predicates affords 'category entitlement'; "obviating the need to ask how the person knows; instead,

simply being a member of some category is treated as sufficient to account for, and warrant their knowledge of a specific domain” (Potter 1996: 133). Predicates and entitlement operate in tandem: predicates suggest that an actor fits to certain qualities, while entitlement bestows qualities upon them (see Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998: 213-219, Phoenix 2008: 70-74).

Related to this deep network of social and cultural understanding is Schegloff's claim that categories' specialness is their 'inference richness': "They are the store-house and the filing system for the common-sense knowledge that ordinary people – that means all people in their capacity as ordinary people – have about what people are like, how they behave etc." (2007: 469). Categories can thus go beyond merely referentially grouping people but can imply or index appropriate locally suitable responses as talk-in-interaction moves along. In this way, categories are relevant to analysing sequential matters and therefore, interactional involvement (see Housley & Fitzgerald 2015 11-14, Stokoe & Attenborough 2015).

But to commit to Schegloff's metaphor of 'category as storehouse' (2007: 469) surely begs the question: how Schegloff (as an advocate of CA) imagines how any such constructs or models enter the storehouse and where they have arrived from? Categories, but more particularly for the moment their associated predicates, and the inferences they carry with them are deemed unwarranted unless made relevant in the local business. Any interpretation made with an analyst's knowledge or insight is therefore only provisional (see Stokoe 2012: 282). It is at this point there is potential for methodological tension between categorisation and Bamberg's narrative positioning model. MCA is the foundation of ethnomethodology, whose adherents advocate analytical agnosticism and to only consider the text at hand. Bamberg's method, at levels one and two, targets the interactional episode with a potentially fine grained approach as it splits the narrating and narrated worlds. So, even though offering a finer grain of analysis, from an EM/CA perspective (that had also mobilised narrative analysis), it embraces too broad a contextual view, as it targets more durable concepts of 'who I am' at level three.

This is the position from which I make some of my analytical inferences. It raises the question of where any boundary might exist on an "infinite regress" of contextual matter (Baumann & Briggs 1990: 68) when making inferences as an analyst. Where does making "wild and promiscuous" assumptions (Schegloff

2007) blend with ethnographic knowledge (see 3.5 on positioning, De Fina 2013) or researching a field the researcher works? (Increasing interest in linguistic ethnography has been partly fuelled by those within institutional systems rather than language research theory per-se (Rampton et al 2004).)

### **3.5 Positioning myself: an (auto)ethnographic framework.**

I have discussed positioning as an interactional process by which the participants stage their professional selves. By some measure, the same theoretical construct can be used to situate myself within the entwined and imbricated contexts of the thesis, the data event, and crafts culture. I have set out the rationale and context describing in broad, autobiographical terms how I came to this research (1.4). In this section I elaborate on my position as a practitioner researcher, someone who is an active participant in the site they are researching. I will frame my position initially with linguistic ethnography and then move to autoethnography. I go on to argue that these approaches are consistent with presenting the analysis as a telling case (Mitchell 1984: 237). Finally, I discuss the implications of anonymising the data.

My research interests and my own life intersect. Writing this thesis is part of the process of trying to understand the uses of language in my professional field. But as interwoven with my life as the thesis is it is not intended to be 'my story'. As Allen writes, telling 'my story' might be nice but a researcher must also validate their work with theoretical and methodological tools. This can answer the 'so what?' asked of describing self-experience (2006 in Ellis, Adams, & Bochner 2006).

Being self-implicated means that I cannot be a "professional stranger" (Agar 1980), it would be difficult to estrange myself from the scene I have worked in for so long. The "serendipitous advantage" (Vryan in Anderson 2006: 406) of the compelling experience that I am writing about needs to be accounted for methodologically.

As a participant-researcher I am someone who "seeks to uncover, record, interpret and position from an insider's perspective and experience, the processes they use within the context of professional contemporary practices" (Stewart 2003). The processes I am uncovering and interpreting, to use Stewart's terms, are double-layered. At one level, the content of the data, its topicality and

concerns reveal something of how craftwork is done and situated in the participants' world. But it is the process of how that is done, the taken for granted process of situationally working with talk, that is the focal layer of analysis.

Linguistic ethnography (LE) is an "interpretative approach which studies the local and immediate actions of actors from their point of view and considers how these interactions are embedded in wider social contexts and structures" (Copland and Creese 2015: 13). LE is compatible with my position because it is "More motivated by interests generated by practical activity than by a fascination with academic theory per-se" as "an attempt to find a way of adequately rendering quite extensive personal experience...involving...frustration with the institutional processes in which people have found themselves living" (Rampton et al 2004: 12). Rampton et al signal a legitimisation of an insider, i.e. not a 'stranger' position as researcher, one whose "point of view" is caught-up in the research. These perspectives reflect my position, of a curious practitioner, motivating the research (1.4). Therefore LE speaks to my "extensive personal experience" and desire to interrogate aspects of "institutional processes". But as a singular approach, it does not necessarily account for my position in the research. Put another way, LE 'lets me in' to the research, but it might not account for my place there.

Writing the thesis as an insider is part of the process of revealing professional practices alluded to by Stewart (above). On the one hand, my position is merely a particular and in-micro example of Hammersley and Atkinson's claim "that it (social research) is part of the world it studies" (1983: 3). No researcher can withdraw or erase themselves from the scene, but on the other hand this is a personally and professionally motivated thesis and I am implicated.

Given that an overarching theme of the thesis might be glossed as how local accounts and positions fit, map onto, contradict, or are mutually-shaped by larger discursive forces, my position is made relevant. My position in the crafts affords a perspective on this beyond the immediate business (see 3.5.1, autoethnography). My knowledge of the craft field problematises the analysis insofar as getting to macro representations from the micro, rather than vice versa (De Fina 2013: 44). But the thesis also maintains that what is being analysed is some kind of performance, the people talking are on show in a professional situation. Benwell & Stokoe point out that performance-based identity research, despite being constructionist, often takes for granted the non-constructionist

starting point that the analyst is already aware of their participants' social identities, importing "analysts' rather than participants categories" (Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 56-57). De Fina (2008 & 2013) advocates that such ethnographic knowledge be included in the interpretation: "Through such observation the analyst can grasp not only what is going on between the participants in a specific interaction, but can also discover which categories and processes have a more general significance" (De Fina 2013: 46).

What I am writing about cannot avoid being informed by what I have experienced. Who I am, including who I am as a participant researcher inevitably shapes the analysis and interpretation. Atkinson later extended his view on the co-implication and close reliance of researcher and site to one that seems to embrace the idea of the researcher wilfully researching where they are, rather than inevitably occupying the same time and space: "The list of ethnographic projects that draw on personal commitment or accident is a very long one... There is therefore, no need to rely exclusively on post-modernist rationales to justify such auto/biographical bases for ethnographic work" (2006: 401). Atkinson's openness to participant researchers is consistent with LE as a methodological entry point, but the presence of the self in the research is more fully accounted for through autoethnography. Rather than 'merely' accounting for the self, autoethnography situates the researcher closer to the centre of the process, to "analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner 2011). As socially-constituted entities, no personal viewpoint is totally isolated, each one can contribute to cultural knowledge (Stahlke Wall 2016: 7). The researcher can thus be seen as a conduit and exemplar of cultural phenomena.

### *3.5.1 Autoethnography.*

In 3.2 I drew on small story research's critical position: how it seeks to trouble canonical representations and how small stories, particularly when taken as counter narratives (Giroux et al 1996, Bamberg 2004), might mobilise resistances to master or hegemonic narratives. This stance is well-matched with one of autoethnography's aims, to "question canonical stories—conventional, authoritative, and "projective" storylines that "plot" how "ideal social selves" should live" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner 2011 para 25). However, autoethnography is a diverse and contested field and the thesis is not intended to be as singular,

confessional, or self-revelatory as definitions set out (see Ellis & Bochner 2000: 739-744).

In arts research, particularly practice-based research where the artist and the research are implicated, autoethnography can provide an appropriate framework: "Autoethnography is gaining momentum as a research method within the creative and performing arts, partly because of the opportunity it provides for writers, artists, performers and others to reflect critically upon their personal and professional creative experiences." (Pace 2012: 2). However, writing from a broader social sciences perspective than Pace's position in the arts, Anderson has argued that Autoethnography (AE) has become dominated by evocative autoethnography (2006: 373). Evocative autoethnography (EAE) is an anti-essentialist post-modern form that is grounded in an "epistemology of emotion" (Ellis & Bochner 2000: 744 in Anderson 2006: 377). Anderson's main criticism of EAE appears to be "author saturation" (2006: 386) and argues that evocation and emotion might compromise how AE could "fit productively in other traditions of social inquiry" (2006: 374 and see Stahlke Wall 2016). He argues that more accountable analytical processes recognisable to wider social science research, if used as part of AE, would make AE more acceptable and adoptable as a method. But I am not writing an autoethnography – *noun*, as a product, I am writing a thesis that is to some extent autoethnographic – *adjective*, as part of the process of researching an aspect of mine and other's professional environment. The point I am trying to make can be supported by Green & Bloome (1997). They set out the case that ethnography as a broad approach is more tightly defined within the specific disciplinary boundaries that the ethnography is being done. They make a distinction between "ethnography-of-education (e.g. anthropologists or sociologists studying education) and ethnography-in-education (e.g. educational researchers...employing ethnographic research to study education)" (1997: 2). I find myself in a position that Green & Bloome describe as "how students and teachers have taken up the role of social scientists...in order to explore their own communities" (1997: 2). It is a stance consistent with LE's position on insiders and personal experience.

I am, on Anderson's terms (after Adler & Adler 1987), a complete member researcher (CMR). CMR status requires that the researcher is immersed in the scene where they are researcher, that they become or are one of the researched. Adler & Adler (1987: 67-84 in Anderson 2006: 387) draw a distinction in this regard between 'convert' and 'opportunistic' member researchers. A convert



CMR identifies a scene and becomes a member of that community. I am an opportunistic CMR, similar to those who come to LE, (discussed above) implicated through professional and/or personal intimacy with group membership.

Engaging with others as part of the research process within a collaborative framework of gallery talks and subjecting that data to accountable language research methods answers Anderson's plea for "dialogue with informants beyond the self, and commitment to theoretical analysis" (2006: 378). By positioning my researched self alongside others who hold similar subject positions (the notion of the discursively shaped practitioner, chapter 2), I "engage with others in the field" and answer the point that "no ethnographic work is a warrant to generalise from an N of one" (Anderson 2006: 386). So, framing my own and my co-workers' experience of the gallery talks in a language research context "use(s) personal experience to illustrate facets of cultural experience and in so doing make characteristics of a culture familiar for insiders and outsiders" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner 2011 para 9). The analytic framework also establishes distance, lifting the interpretation above one of "what happened" (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 213).

As concerned as the analysis is with one particular moment, an accountable engagement with analytic processes and theory allows the representation to be decontextualised and recontextualised. Theory and engaging with others as part of the process allows 'my story' to be uploaded into broader discourses. In this way, the analysis becomes a "telling case" (Mitchell 1984: 237) as I discuss in the next section

### *3.5.2 Case studies and telling cases as ethnographic approaches.*

The thesis focusses on a particular moment of professional life in its data. On the one hand, it is those very particularities of situated talk that I am exploring in my analysis. On the other hand, that type of moment is a routine part of professional life experienced by many people working in the crafts, so it is also quite general. This approach sits well with Mitchell's argument that "using a case study to support an argument show(s) how general principles deriving from some theoretical orientation manifest themselves in some given set of particular circumstances" (1984: 239).

I have analysed (for the most part) one hour of data as a representation of the data-set as an “apt illustration...to impart a sense of concreteness to an otherwise overwhelmingly abstract account” (Mitchell 1984: 237). The focus brought to bear on one particular episode emphasises the specificity of “the event” (Hymes 1974, Bauman & Briggs 1990). In addition, focusing on a particular episode highlights the case that talk can afford and enable professional accomplishments frequently and densely rather than as occasional, isolated moments. This stance is consistent with views on talk as “multiple layers of participant orientation and interactional tasks” (Housley & Fitzgerald 2015: 10-11 see 3.6) and Sacks’s view that talk is ‘thick’, not just serial (1995 vol. II: 561 in Fitzgerald).

The research is a case study where “a description of a specific configuration of events in which some distinctive set of actors have been involved in some defined situation at some particular point of time” (Mitchell 1984: 237).

Hammersley (1992: 184) advises that case studies are neither constrained nor defined by scale or magnitude of the case to be studied, rather that attention is brought to bear on a particular phenomenon. Brewer states that case studies are “*distinguished by...the researcher’s direct involvement and participation in them.*” (2000: 77 my italics) consistent with an autoethnographic position. Stake defines three types of case study (2000: 437): salient to this thesis are Stake’s first two types, ‘intrinsic’ and ‘instrumental’. The data are intrinsic cases, they are of a particular project and exhibition, interesting in its own right. But they are also instrumental as they “provide insight into an issue or redraw a generalization” (Stake 2000: 437). Instrumental cases underpin arguments outside or aside to the intrinsic case “facilitat(ing) understanding of something else, whether it be a theoretical debate or a social problem” (Brewer 2000: 77).

In the case of this thesis, the data mobilise a critique of the discourses that frame the participants’ professional lives. From this I argue it is possible to make inferences and theorise from the particularities of the data and the research findings, not statistically but through a synthesis of language-analysis theories as a “telling case” (Mitchell 1984: 239). Mitchell argues; “using a case study to support an argument show(s) how general principles deriving from some theoretical orientation manifest themselves in some given set of particular circumstances”. In this way, the selection of a particular piece of data, coupled with my position as a CMR, aligns to the argument that: “Case studies used in this way are clearly more than ‘apt illustrations’. Instead they are the means

whereby general theory may be developed, since it is through the fieldworker's intimate knowledge of the interconnections among the actors and events constituting the case study or social situation, that the fieldworker is strategically placed to appreciate the theoretical significance of these interconnections." (Mitchell 1984: 239-40).

### *3.5.3 Anonymisation.*

As a participant researcher, a CMR, I am in the data as one of the craftspeople who took part in the project. The data have been anonymised, people and places have been given pseudonyms, including me. Anonymisation of participants is part of the research ethics protocol of the university, it is a requirement that fits with how I have established the thesis. I will attempt to explain here.

In the academic field I come from, it is quite normal for a researcher to be a participant or a research subject. This is especially true of practice-based PhDs and other projects where the artist and their identity is implicated in and relevant to the research's meaning through for example, the evolution of publicly known works, or professional development. This situation is partly a product of the scenario described in chapter two where artists and craftspeople, particularly in institutional settings, are encouraged to turn their studio-practice into formal research outputs. Because the researcher's identity is meaningful to the research, anonymisation is rare in these settings (see Partington 2013: 193). Anonymisation is also rare in AE, where the aim is to critically and analytically frame a personal story. However, self-disclosure in AE implicates other participants and sites in a complex of relational ethics that needs managing by the researcher (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner 2011). Strategies might include participant anonymisation where the "meaningfulness of the research story is more important than the precise recounting of detail" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner 2011).

The argument of this thesis is different. My starting point is that a particular type of crafts practitioner has been wrought by the institutional and discursive forces of their education and professional lives. The data come from a small group of these type of people (myself included) working together. The job of the thesis is to convince of the validity and effectiveness of the research methods. This does not rely on writing something convincing about Liz, for example, as a biographically recognisable artist. I am also less concerned about my own place

in the data than if this were the type of art or craft research outlined above. My approach is almost the opposite, as I am trying to reveal the concerns that are made relevant at a local level in the face of the discourses that I argue have shaped such people. By loosening the participants' biographical ties and putting to one side their big story identities, I argue that it becomes easier to decontextualise and recontextualise the thesis as a telling case, to extend the hypothesis. This is not to suggest that everything made relevant locally is generalisable to all crafts practitioners, this is a study of a particular moment. But the general argument is that attending to moments of situated interaction can position complementary and sometimes contradictory voices alongside larger discourses.

The thesis uses the concept of the anonymised actor at two levels, critically and analytically. Critically, I am suggesting that a particular 'type' of practitioner has been (at least partially) shaped by discursive forces, individual biography is of less importance here. And analytically, by which the analysis can be more easily read as a telling case by stripping away the distractions of biographical attributes.

Despite anonymity being critically and analytically useful, it is also inescapable that the participants are real people, the data are of situated professional life. Anonymity does not mean an actor is supplanted by a bleached-out token. The data are populated by participants who also live outside the data. So, in 3.6 I introduce the participants, sketching some key points about their professional make-up. That the anonymised participants are real people is relevant to the analysis because the frameworks I have used such as counter narratives, positioning, category analysis, and performance approaches can be dependent on contexts outside the immediate interaction. Although people and sites have been anonymised in the data for methodological reasons, it is feasible that participants might be recognised by particular readers. Recognising this, I have sought consent from the participants that they are happy to be recognised through chance or deduction.

The construct of the discursively shaped practitioner is dependent on broad contextual forces. One of the things I bring to the analysis is a knowledge of those contextual forces. Therefore, how I choose to analyse and interpret what the participants make relevant locally is shaped by my ethnographic knowledge and embeddedness as a CMR. This means that my position as a researcher is more critically and methodologically relevant than as an identifiable craftsperson.

As a CMR I bring my knowledge and interpretation of contextual detail, but being a CMR can bring tension. Because I cannot be a “professional stranger”, my analysis could be questioned for its impartiality and my subjectivity highlights the provisional nature of analysis. However, this is also consistent with the view that there is “No neutral mode of report” (Hammersley & Atkinson 1980: 207).

### 3.6 The data

In this part of the chapter I

- Describe the data’s occasioning and setting, continuing its framing as a staged event. I include a description of the participants.
- Present an overall first pass of the whole data.
- Discuss the methodological decision to select one hour of the data for the analysis.
- And discuss the way the transcriptions are presented in the analysis chapters.

The data were collected at five concurrent ‘gallery conversations’ scheduled to take place during a temporary exhibition at a London gallery. The five events were interspersed over a two week period and each was recorded in its entirety. The decision was made by the exhibiting craftspeople to schedule the events for different times of the day, across afternoons and evenings and weekdays and weekends. The intention was to enable more potential visitors, all with varying domestic and professional commitments, to be able to attend at least one event. A small digital voice recorder was used to record the events, placed on the bench that ran through the middle of the room. Each event was a little under two hours long, so there is about nine and a half hours of data.

The decision was made at the outset of the research to use only audio to record the data. Video recordings were not made and this was a methodological decision. Speaking is one of a diverse range of semiotic systems simultaneously available and in play during interactional encounters (see Streeck, Goodwin, and LeBaron 2014, Pink 2001, Heath & Luff 2007, Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001). This thesis shows how language is situated in creative practice, and challenges the hegemonic assumptions of a craft literature that has partitioned craft practice and language. To bring analytical focus to spoken interaction and to clarify specific

achievements made with it justifies loosening it from its entanglement with other congruent semiotic systems in play, enabling the sole focus to be on language.

### *3.6.1 Ethnographic description.*

Framing the gallery conversations as a staged event embedded the notion of performance. Attending to the theatricality of the talks situates the key participants as performers. Although ‘naturally occurring’, as staged events the talks had been planned to take place. We decided to hold five talks, hoping that with several events more people would be able to come and take part.

Dates and times were discussed and agreed between the exhibitors and the gallery and colleagues, peers, clients, and friends were emailed and invited. A single-page flyer – analogous to a playbill – was artworked and attached to the email. The key participants arrived before each advertised start time and carried on with ‘backstage’ work (Goffman 1981): chairs were found and put out, tea was made in the gallery kitchen while they checked in with the staff and chatted amongst themselves.

The talks took place at a central London gallery in the same space as the show. The gallery was in a street where four-storey Georgian townhouses had largely been turned into smart offices or shops. Cafes and a pub across the road, in addition to the shops meant the area was always busy, but in a more reserved way than the noisier, more hectic major shopping streets close by. Once through the plate glass façade, the gallery opened into two distinct spaces, down a broad flight of steps flanked by various works to a retail area. Tightly gridded display shelves, plinths, and vitrines housed ceramics, jewellery, glassware, and metalwork. Textile works hung on the walls and one or two small pieces of furniture were dotted amongst the display. A smooth concrete floor, white walls, and spotlights ensured that the space, while busy with objects, also had a certain ‘modern’ sharpness. From the street-level entrance where there was a staff desk and a number of works displayed on the walls, there was a gently-ramping walkway that led to the exhibition space at the back of the building. The walkway hugged one flank of the space, and afforded a view down into the lower retail space as it was crossed. As it opened out into the rectangular gallery space, daylight flooded down from the skylights. Turning round, the glass façade framed the street view of people going about their business, passing taxis and cyclists.

The gallery programmed temporary exhibitions in this space, typically four or five per year. They were an opportunity to show new work, sometimes by an individual and sometimes a small group show organised around some theme or another. Although work was for sale in the temporary shows, and sales are of course welcomed by an artist, the space did not have the same retail feel of the downstairs space. It was the sort of space that might be imagined with the term White Cube, cited in the discussion in chapter five.

We were four crafts practitioners who had worked together for the first time the previous year. The earlier project directly informed the current one and is often referred to in narratives in the data. It was a self-initiated and organised project in Munich. As part of a large international art-jewellery festival, we had made and exhibited our work in an operating foundry during their weekend break.

One was a jeweller, one a silversmith now working in less valuable metals, one a metalworker who uses a range of other materials, and one a furniture maker. All of us, at the time of the events, also worked part-time teaching our subjects in a range of university art departments, a quite usual pattern of work. All of us had also been educated in the UK art college system at various times in the mid-1980s to the mid-90s. I would argue that we all had some sort of awareness of contemporary craft's historic and current discourses, were aware of other work in the field, and this awareness was partly because of the needs of teaching and partly through professional curiosity. All had some sort of profile or professional presence in the field through exhibiting and showing work in the UK and internationally. To greater or lesser degrees we were the sort of discursively-produced subjects that I discuss in chapter two. Three of the visitors to the event figure in the data: Jane is an art department lecturer who twenty years ago also ran her own studio-jewellery practice. During her time teaching she has recently undertaken an MA in architecture. Rachel works at a university, and having studied in the arts, is setting up a materials library in the university as part of a cross-disciplinary research and teaching centre. Ben is an arts manager and administrator who, similarly to Jane, several years ago used to have his own workshop making studio glass.

The talks took place amongst the work in the gallery, chairs were placed in more-or-less circular arrangement around the room. We tried to avoid the idea of a frontstage by not sitting together as a group of exhibitors so the talks might feel more 'in the round'. Whether this was an effective strategy or not is of less

interest than it being a conscious decision of stage management – as of course were all the other decisions made about setting out the space. The gallery had its stock of plinths and vitrines but we had decided to make the space more our own, take over the space for a month or two. The gallery's fittings were removed to behind the scenes and we made up our own display furniture. We had decided to show the smaller work on simple plywood panels sat on folding trestles around the main wall of the space; larger pieces, five or six of them, sat directly on the floor of the gallery. The space was near enough divided on one diagonal by two enormous rough-sawn wooden boards laid end to end supported at workbench height on heavy trestles. The idea was to provide a focal point and place to carry on working during the exhibition, and some more of the smaller pieces were set on it too. There was also a large chalkboard on wheels where we had mapped out a timeline of the project to aid its interpretation. This was usually pushed back out of the way for the talks.

In Goffman's terms the folk populating the event are 'ratified participants' playing their part in a 'participation framework'. All but one of the talks took place out of normal gallery opening hours, so Goffman's categories of 'eavesdroppers' and 'bystanders' can reasonably be discounted. The visitors had come to a particular event, at a particular place at a particular time and a strong inference can be made that they expected the key participants to talk about the projects and the resulting exhibited work in some way or another. The organisation, the expectation of likely content to be delivered by particular people, the assumption and planning of what the key participants are there to talk about, frames these events as performances.

### *3.6.2 A first pass of the data: overarching topics.*

Each of the events began roughly on time and after visitors had sat down and made themselves comfortable, one of the exhibitors started by saying hello and thanking people for coming. The exhibitors were introduced and the project name mentioned, it was explained that although organised by the exhibitors, the intention was that the talk wouldn't be a lecture. The hope was that visitors would join in, asking questions and raise their own interests. Each of the talks featured (initially) an explanation of the project for the first several minutes. It was explained how the group had got together to work in Munich the year before, and consequently, they had wanted to evolve another project from which this work



came. Part of this introduction involved outlining how ongoing works were moved between each of the four, how the makers had worked alone, and on occasions as a group, and the timescales involved.

Certain topics recurred across the events, some of which related to the nature of the project, while others related to a wider craftworld. Those topics relating to the project included: the open-ended aspect to the project, that the aim had not necessarily been to make finished artefacts but simply to make, and that there had been no obligation to produce exhibitable work. This was in part because the offer of exhibiting the project had come after the project had run its course. The initial impetus was to see what happened when craftspeople worked collectively on a project having no limits or obligations. The latter was a key point.

This topic informed discussion about how applications for funding and exhibition proposals almost always ask what the resultant work would be. There was generally resistance and dissatisfaction with this model, as most of the participants held the view that 'you don't know what you're going to do until you've done it'; that to pre-determine an output is to deny artistic process. The concept of process is one of the themes that recurs in the data and some of its uses are looked at in chapter four. The project and exhibition itself had not received any funding, nor had funding been applied for. The discussion on funding is relevant to the wider context of the 'craftworld', as were many other topics. It exemplifies how the local and more distal contexts co-constitute each other.

The theme of trust came up frequently, with all of the exhibitors saying that they trusted each other. Trust seemed to be relevant in two ways: firstly to trust each other to work professionally and responsibly with each other's work, and shared work on such an open project. And secondly each trusted each other's abilities and knowledge. The two aspects are related, but all made clear that they found trust and confidence through having had established careers and being aware of each other's established careers. There seemed to be a quality of mutuality that went some way to inform group affiliation.

The key participants sometimes discussed their regular methods of working. Two approximations of working practices were used to characterise the key participants: Liz and John were described as working in measured, controlled ways, designing and problem-solving before they started on the substantive job of making a piece. Haley and Dan were cast as working rather differently, and by

not usually having a plan, they would tend to work directly with the materials to hand, and work progressively from each iteration. These differences were observed and remarked upon, and occasionally used to tease and joke between the four.

Dissatisfaction with the institutional craftsworld became relevant through a number of topics. One of these was the lack of good galleries to show work, and comments were often made, by visitors too, that galleries were frequently merely shops. This was extended to the apparent inability of galleries to sell work. Galleries were criticised for not being bold or adventurous with their exhibiting programmes. This related to people's aspirations for their own work, but also for what they would hope to see when visiting galleries. The participants related this to the current show by talking about being able to challenge this status quo.

There were a number of occasions when criticisms were levelled at ways that television programmes showed crafts practices. Referencing a particular programme, the participants considered that an hour of television about a novice thatching a roof or blacksmithing had very little to do with their world.

Embedded working practices and educational background were often cited as forming people's characteristics and worldviews. This topic informed talk of how the environment in which someone lives might shape their aesthetic. The participants considered how living in the city might cause work to be angular and geometric, and living in the countryside might explain why work might appear organic or naturalistic.

The talk about trust and working together led to positive comments about how social exchange can lead to innovation and unexpected perspectives. This was contrasted to working alone for extended periods, when the opportunity to trade ideas does not so readily occur. From this, the topic of authorship, who exactly had made the work, came to the fore. Without exception the key participants claimed that as joint-work, authorship was shared. This enabled them to talk about people coming to the show and insisting on knowing which work was made by Dan, or Haley, for example. This was met by collective amusement or surprise.

The way in which the project was set up, the idea of moving part-made work between people was revisited in each event. Frequently, well into the event, a visitor would want a reminder of the general idea. The project was explained in each conversation's introduction, but recapping the idea was always revisited.

The recaps were always more elaborate than the introductory version. It was taken as an opportunity to exemplify with one particular strand of the work, and this strand always varied. The explanation was always made while sitting, despite the work being in the room, available to fetch and demonstrate with.

Although all the key participants evaluated the project positively, it was also common for the theme of difficulty to emerge. There was an apparent continuum of some work coming very easily, to episodes of struggle and confusion. It was made clear that they were sometimes working outside of their comfort zones; a settlement with the work was always reached, though. Sometimes this involved confession or negative evaluation of the work being unsuccessful.

A general consensus emerged that talking amongst the group had been instrumental in how the project had evolved and in how ideas had emerged. Indeed, the transition from reflecting on the time in Munich to settling on the organisation of the current project was described as happening through a day spent walking and talking in London. It was made clear by the exhibitors that what they had done was largely unplanned, one event had led to another, making decisions along the way. The group also expressed frustration at the number of visitors asking for an exact method, so that they might duplicate the project for themselves.

The project remained topical across the talks and as sketched above it also afforded the opportunity to address broader contexts. As much as the project of making together remained visible, explicit technical talk about the procedures of making was not made relevant. The lack of peer-to-peer technical talk become topicalised in the data. It was mentioned that the only time when traditional instructions about making things were relevant was when the group worked together in John's workshop one day to make the trestles and other display equipment. There seemed to be an attitude that part of the project's point was to explore some new techniques and methods, so although placing themselves in the role of novices from time to time, none sought instruction from each other. I would summarise this as less to do with *how* to make and more to do with *the conditions by which* to make. This made more relevant the social and socialising aspects of the project.

The whole data on first pass exhibited a range of topics and concerns, and as is made clear above, these deviated from any idea of flatly reporting the 'how-to' of making the work in the project. A range of professional and social topics became relevant, some of which recurred through the data. I decided to focus the analysis on one hour of the data (appendix A). My intention has been to show the way that talk is implicated in the professional lives of craft practitioners, and the first pass of the data showed that I did not have to range far and wide across the data in order to cherry-pick examples to argue my case. A small data sample tightens the thesis argument that language-in-practice is professionally relevant to these practitioners. There are occasions in the analysis when I draw on data from outside this hour to elaborate the discussion. The hour selected is reflective of the major topics made relevant across the wider data set and I expand on this decision next.

### *3.6.3 Selecting one hour of data as a telling case.*

The complete data set comprised of 9.5 hours of audio recording made across 5 events. In this section I set out the decision to select a one hour extract from the set as the basis of the analysis. The decision was based on three arguments: conditions, richness, and typicality.

The first reason concerns the general conditions under which the selection was recorded. My intention was to capture professionally-situated talk that was as near as possible, naturally occurring. The events occurred as part of the normative fabric of a professional crafts practitioner's life. Put another way, these events would have been happening anyway. That is one way of defining naturally occurring. Another describes how each of the events changed in character and mood as they progressed. I am aware that I am taking an interpretative position and my observation is open to discussion. Each event followed a similar structure (see above), as part of this each event appeared to 'open out' in the second hour. By this I mean that each event became more conversational as visitors participated more frequently and topics seemed to overlap and bleed between each other more freely. The events' topicality tended to embrace broader contexts and be framed by wider concerns. In contrast the first hour of each talk, following welcomes, introductions, and housekeeping, tended to fall to explanations and background information on the project and those involved. As a

general observation each event shifted from informational to conversational. Based on this, one particular second-hour was selected. This was done because of the reasons noted above and because its topicality touched upon and reflected the topicality of other periods of the data.

Secondly, the richness of the data was a key factor. A relatively small sample slices through an episode of situated professional life. My argument is that a lot is being done in situated talk as it unfolds. The thesis makes the case that the apparent mundanity of talk, its taken-for-grantedness, obscures the accomplishments and the work happening in everyday talk. To substantiate this, I want to show the density and richness of those moments. It would be inconsistent with this point of view to then range far and wide across a large corpus of data to pick out isolated moments that suited my point. My position is methodologically compatible with MCA where talk is taken to have interlocking levels in depth, not merely a serial surface (Sacks 1995, vol. 2: 561 in Fitzgerald 2015, Housley & Fitzgerald 2015: 10-11, and see 3.4).

And thirdly, the data selected are typical and as such I argue that the data form a telling case (Mitchell 1984: 239), congruent with Stake's (2000: 437) instrumental case. Argument, theory, and observations developed from the data can animate the discussion of craft and language in other situations. The data selected was telling of the other second hours in the data set. As I note above, the events followed similar structural patterns and each second hour was more conversational and fluid than each first hour. The project and exhibition remained topical but from this core other themes, concerns, and interests were included by various speakers. The selected hour is thus telling of similar professionally-situated interactional encounters.

It is important to regard the telling case as a consequence of all three points. It relates specifically to point three, typicality, but is sustained by the other arguments that the data represents a slice of everyday talk from a professional setting.

### 3.6.4 A note on the transcriptions.

“Transcription is a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions” (Ochs 1999: 168). The main concern of the research is the content of the data and the use of small stories as a resource in self-presentation. The talk is jointly-produced but I am less concerned with the sequential mechanics of talk’s production (as per CA) than how the topic of a small story highlights the phenomenon of situated interaction as a site of social meaning-making. The talk was socially and jointly produced but an aspect of its situatedness was that speaker turns appeared to be more or less respected by all the participants i.e. the talk was not a free-for-all of overlapping turns and interruptions. Gallery conversations, as a genre, appear to feature certain levels of politeness and respect for interlocutors to have their say. The transcriptions do not need to carry the same level of detail used by researchers who study narratives as interaction based on CA (see Taylor 2010: 53-54).

However, the thesis is grounded in narratives as situated social practices, and part of my critical position is that people are talking together and this contributes to creative labour. So there is some focus on how talk is built up between people, on the give and take, the flow of interaction. The excerpts are therefore presented in an uncomplicated script style with interactional markers when necessary for the analysis. Some extracts are single-speaker utterances. Here, the lines are shown in a simple script style with any pauses or hesitations shown. Each speaker is normally given a new line start and the transcribed lines follow the intonational units recognisable in the audio recordings, usually similar to a grammatical clause. I show the transcription symbols here.

Where a speaker’s words closely follow another’s, or there is an interruption a pair of strokes is used thus:

6) - y’know it it is that really/  
7) Liz: /mmm

Where a new speaker takes over with less immediacy the change is shown thus:

7) Liz: /mmm  
8) Haley: that really it’s an acknowledgement of

Slight pauses and hesitations (less than half a second) are indicated by a single dash, - . A longer pause is indicated by a double-dash, --.

Where a word, or words, is stressed or emphasised it is 'bracketed' by upward arrows, thus:

5) *Haley*: especially I mean I think I would describe this as ↑a maker's↑

This example also shows my use of underlining. I use underlining to indicate the words I draw attention to in the discussion.

Transcriptions with minimal or no notation are adopted (for example) in respect of MCA and performance (Oak 2010: 305-19), small stories in design practice (Oak 2013: 181-88), MCA (Stokoe 2012), small stories embedded in local and societal contexts (Phoenix 2008: 64-7), interactional narrative (Norrick 2000), narrative and identity (Taylor 2010), and storytelling as performance (Bauman 1986).

The use of underlining in the extracts is not a transcription method. I use underlining to emphasise the parts of the excerpt relevant to the surrounding analysis. For example, when discussing Liz's or Haley's use of tripartite lists, I underline the parts of the extract that make up the list. Or when pointing out the repeated and patterned use of a particular word or phoneme, it will be underlined.

### 3.7 Conclusion.

In this chapter I have outlined a methodological approach to the thesis. The data events are framed as situated performances where versions of the professional self are staged through narrative. Narratives are acknowledged to be the interactional product and process of social action. Small stories research is oriented to as an empirical response to the literally small, non-canonical narrative fragments in the data, and for its critical and epistemic stance. Small stories reveal how various participants position themselves and others using both explicit and symbolic ways of categorising experience. The thesis orients to a small stories approach, critically, and empirically, however, through the upcoming analysis and discussion the terms small story, narrative, and story are used more-or-less interchangeably. My interest is to cut into the local discursive fabric and retain "fleeting moments of orientation to the world" (Hymes 1996 in Georgakopoulou 2007: vii) as small stories emerge in the moment-by-moment concrete environment of language-as-practice.

I also discuss the ethnographic setting of the project, hinged largely around my role as a participant-researcher. I position myself as a complete member researcher whose engagement with language analysis and theory moves the research away from emotive or confessional autoethnography critiqued by Anderson (2006). A case for anonymisation is made on the basis of the construct of the discursively-shaped practitioner being more relevant to the research than a biographically identifiable one. I make the argument that the data and its analysis are a telling case that can animate discussion about craft and language beyond the particularities of the local event. By examining the specificities of a situation an argument can be recontextualised to trouble previous generalisations.

A description of the data collection site is offered and a first-pass of the data is presented. From this, a case is made to select a focussed piece of data, a case based on conditions, richness, and as a telling case.

In the following four chapters I turn to the analysis of the data.



## **Chapter Four. Positioning self as a craft-artist with the category of 'maker' and the concept of 'process'.**

### **4.0 Introduction.**

In chapter two I made the argument that across much of the writing that constitutes the crafts literature there exists a schism between craft practice and the role of language. Because of this the, crafts can be seen as a field where practice, the doing of craft, and theoretical positions, as explicated through language, have been quite effectively partitioned from each other. In some ways this is not a strange situation; theory is generally speaking a process of abstract reasoning dissociated from practical action. And practice is, in equally general terms, the doing of practical action. In the crafts a view has held sway that “almost nothing that is important about a craft can be put into words” and “craft and theory are like oil and water” (Dormer 1997: 219) and that there is a lack of “a common language that made sense of this multiplicity of activities” (Harrod 1999: 409). The literature has privileged the knowledge of skilful practical action as the core of ‘craft knowledge’, and has prescribed it to be tacit – silent, or unsayable (Chapter 2). Driven by its institutions, particularly the universities and the Crafts Council, greater cultural capital has been sought through the validation offered by the lens of academic research. A part of this move has been to communicate ‘the meanings’ of craft, and inescapably, this most often involves speaking and writing. It is a task that might be described as ‘turning making into language’.

Canonical accounts of crafts tend to be etic writings that have taken little account of the place of the spoken discourses that circulate in the lifeworld of professional craft practice. Scant attention has been paid to the role of talk-in-interaction amongst craft practitioners. I depart from these orthodoxies and argue that the production of craft and the social occasioning of talk can operate as texts and contexts in their joint constitution. One isn’t necessarily *about* the other, rather, they are *of* each other: talk is co-constitutive of artistic labour.

In chapter three I outlined a methodology that enables an analysis and interpretation of the situated local discourses of craft practitioners. This chapter focusses on how various participants position themselves and others. They do this by deploying and orienting to the explicit category ‘maker’ as part of a locally-

evolving device. The analysis also shows how positioning is accomplished at more symbolic levels as various meanings of the word 'process' are made available. The data analysed in this chapter comes wholly from the one hour section discussed in chapter three and is presented as a full transcript in appendix 1.

#### **4.0.1 Outline of the chapter.**

The chapter addresses the question:

*How do small stories in interaction mobilise categorisation and positioning to enable cohesion and membership amongst participants? (1.1.1).*

This chapter is in two parts. In the first part I show how positioning (Davies & Harré 1990) as an ongoing interactional accomplishment affords participants the linguistic means to locate themselves in their professional world. Positioning is done as an aspect of telling small stories. It is identity-work, and thus in some ways comparable to 'defining craft' as one of the durable themes of the craft literature. But in these excerpts it is identity-work being done by making relevant at a local level such categories (Schegloff 2007) that the interlocutors find meaningful in this situation. The data shows the participants orienting to a singular category of 'maker', which affords a binding or coalescing of subject positions amongst a group of people who practice different crafts. I show how participants self-identify as a maker, but also move to substantiate their position working-up other categories. I also show how positioning as a maker is accomplished by one participant ventriloquising a storyworld character. The analysis then moves to show how the participants align to other types of creative practices that would not normatively, from an etic perspective, be cast alongside contemporary craft.

In the second part of the chapter I show how 'makers' make available local meanings and understandings of the word 'process' through small stories. Although orienting to being 'makers', very little of the participants' talk across the whole data set is about making things. By 'talk about making things', I mean descriptions and explanations of a more or less technical nature setting out technique or construction. But the word 'process' is made relevant in the data at a number of occasions, so having locally-situated relevance. It is also relevant as process is frequently salient and topical in the craft literature. Process is often

used as a term to capture something of craft's typical characterisations i.e. of procedurally bringing about change to materials with techniques and method. In the participants' talk, process doesn't resolve itself into a fixed definition. In fact, its affordances, at different moments, are quite contrastive. It can be shown to enable various communicative capacities made available as and when relevant in ongoing business. In this way, understandings are built interactionally in local discourse as a mutable symbolic resource.

Both parts of this chapter show how identity and process, concepts salient in craft's hegemonic discourses, are shown to be comparably made relevant and worked with in local discourse as categorisation and positioning strategies.

#### **4.1 Positioning self and others with the category 'maker'.**

The word 'maker' is used twenty-five times throughout this hour long piece of data; by comparison the word 'craft' figures just once. Contemporary craft, as a field, set of disciplines, and cultural phenomenon, has been discursively and institutionally established over the last half-century (Chapter two). The point is that something has been circumscribed as 'craft', and yet these *craft practitioners* are choosing here to define themselves and their world in terms of 'maker'. The key participants, through their education, their teaching and lecturing work, the places that they have shown and have been written about, find themselves embedded in the 'craft world', for want of a better term. But here, the "participants *themselves* make social identities relevant within their interactions" (Greatbatch & Dingwall 1998 p121 after Schegloff 1991).

I am not claiming that the participants have formulated a new identity category for what they do. The word maker, often used as a suffix e.g. furniture maker, designer-maker, for example is embedded in range of ways craft has been identified in its discourses, the Crafts Council exhibition 'The Maker's Eye (1982), and Makers: A History of American Studio Craft (Koplos & Metcalf 2010) offer other examples of its use. 'Maker' has relevance in broader discourses than contemporary craft. For example, technology-oriented DIY culture has given rise to 'Maker-Faires' and magazines such as Makezine, and Make feature detailed instructions on projects and 'hacking' existing products (see Gauntlett 2011, Harrod 2015). What I do suggest, though, is that these participants find particular resonances and affordances through its deployment in this situation which are not so readily available through deploying 'craft'.

#### 4.1.1 Key participants positioning as makers.

In this section I show how Haley orients herself and others as makers as she explicitly calls up the category. Ben, one of the visitors to the event, has asked how the show has been received so far, in particular by other members of the gallery organisation. Haley replies that it has gone down well, as part of her reply Haley says:

##### *Extract 4.1*

- 5) *Haley*: especially I mean I think I would describe this as ↑a maker's↑ exhibition  
 6) - y'know it it is that really/  
 7) *Liz*: /mmm  
 8) *Haley*: that really it's an acknowledgement of what we  
                   all do somehow erm

A number of things are accomplished in this excerpt. Firstly, Haley has set up 'maker' as an identity category (Schegloff 2007). But other work goes on around this. Haley's utterance has been occasioned by Ben's question asking about the response of the other members of the gallery organisation.

She is also aligning the efforts of the makers who produced the show, herself and the other three key participants, to other people who might describe themselves as makers, in this case the membership signalled by Ben. Haley is looking outside of the immediate group towards others, as well as describing and categorising those who made it (the show) as makers. Haley does this with her utterance of "what we all do" in line 8. The use of the pronoun 'we' is socially inclusive, it draws together the key participants, other makers, and as importantly Haley as a maker. Liz's "mmm" is read here as an agreement with Haley's utterance, but can also be interpreted as Liz orienting to the maker category herself. Within the cotext (Titscher et al 2000: 238) of Ben's question and Haley's utterance 'maker' is a refinement or surrogate of 'member'.

The 'we' element is important as all the key participants jointly or singly during the data ascribe to the identity category in their own utterances, for example: Liz says "as a *maker*" (132), Haley later says "But I think as a *maker*" (457). The group affiliation that the use of 'we' suggests can be seen in John's words "trust makers to do something 'cos *we*" (219), and Liz's words "doesn't separate makers from other disciplines or from life itself because *we*" (271-2). The way that the category, in combination with a plural pronoun, 'we', can be seen to infer local affiliation.

The word maker receives no explanation or unpacking during the event, in this situation, as for these interlocutors its social function appears clear despite having no explicit definition ascribed to it. Its deployment is never questioned vis-à-vis its appropriateness, and indeed, as I will come to show, appears to have socially-positive values or qualities as interlocutors orient toward it in their talk.

Shortly after the first extract, other categories are made relevant in a small story. Their emergence begins to illustrate how ‘maker’ might take its place in a categorisation device alongside other characterisations.

*Extract 4.2*

- 15) *Haley*: we did notice at the first talk that we did in here which was - er the  
 16) the second talk we did - a couple of Saturdays ago that there were  
 17) people coming up they weren't members they were customers coming up  
 18) the ramp and turning round and I don't think it's 'cos we were talking  
 19) I think they they they're not that interested - it it it's funny well/  
 20) *Ben*: /↑what - in this?↑  
 21) *Haley*: - in the exhibition  
 22) *John*: it's just kind of people like different things isn't it we like certain things  
 so  
 23) people carrying Selfridges bags come in and realise it's not for them and its  
 fine

In line 17 Haley refers to “people”. Interpreting Schegloff (2007) I suggest people does not count here as a category, it is too broad: it is a totalising collective noun that permits no other category, as they would not be people. Between Haley and John they gradually refine the “people” alluded to in line 17. Haley’s “people” is generic, as I suggest above, non-specific in the extreme. She uses a deictic “they” to “weren’t members” in the same line, which is still generic but has greater specificity as it clarifies that in her view these “people” weren’t members, referring to Ben’s earlier use, or by extension, makers. Then again “they” points onward to “customers” (17), a more specified category but still undefined in that they might be customers of the gallery or customers of other shops. The notion of “customers” is refined in John’s “people carrying Selfridge’s bags” in line 23, confirming that they are customers from another shop. Haley assesses them negatively in line 19 as being “not that interested”. It is interesting that these characters in the story are called up as customers with no evidence of them being so in the story itself other than the visual evidence as reported by John with his reference “Selfridges bags” in line 23. John evaluates the story after Ben’s question had been answered.

'Maker', then can be determined as an identity category that the key participants ascribe and align to as individuals and collectively.

The following excerpt also shows Haley identifying as a maker. The group had been discussing the fact that the exhibited work, as a result of their deciding to show everything they had done together to more fully illustrate the process of their work, looked less 'finished' or well defined compared to normative expectations of a craft exhibition.

*Extract 4.3*

457) *Haley*: But I think as a maker it's still difficult for people to accept some of  
458) this messy stuff or that they think it's badly made somehow.

Haley identifies with being a maker and claims that being one exemplifies how she thinks about things, her position informs her world-view. But she also sets up an opposing category in the same utterance, 'people', no more precisely identified than the people who had come into the gallery in the first excerpt are established. They are established in some sort of opposition to how Haley construes things as a maker because of their difficulty in "accept(ing)...messy stuff": attributing a type of behaviour, or epistemic stance "they think it's badly made" (458) to refine a broad notion of people. She appears to be building up a sort of category-bound predicate. The 'people' are possibly distanced further by the use of the deictic pronoun "they", contributing the lack of definition being given to them. In Haley's words, we see 'maker' and it's 'other', 'people', used in close proximity. The preceding excerpt also featured an 'other' category position, 'customers'. The assumption might be made that positioning is only done by aligning to a noun as a category to establish position and opposition. Here, John is describing how he had worked on a project that had been exhibited as part of a touring show that Haley had curated. Positioning is accomplished by not merely orienting to a noun but by orienting to doing things, a category-bound activity.

*Extract 4.4*

397) *John*: I was making work or coming to the end of making work for a show  
398) that Haley curated that was last year that I was involved in - Lesley  
399) was involved in as well erm - which was supposed to be about speed  
400) being something we think about in a contemplative way  
401) - but I made work just as quickly for that really. So that exhibition was  
402) about kind of the relationship to the slow movement and that was  
403) probably one of the biggest misconceptions from people that don't make.

In the excerpt John positions himself with a verb form, making and made, (underlined) in opposition to a negative formulation of another category position on line 403. John is already positioned 'as a maker' at this event, so here he can use the verb 'to make' as an index to his professional practice; his work as a maker. By using a verb, a claim could be made that he is positioning himself as an 'active' maker. It is as well for someone to say that they are a maker, but here John is saying that he does making: he is a maker because he makes, a category-bound activity. This might or might not be a strategic move, as at the event there are a number of people who have been makers and are now fully occupied by teaching or administration roles such as Ben and Jane. Perhaps John's utterance affords the opportunity for him to offset himself from them? Of less doubt is his formulation of people 'other' to himself. He works this as a negation, making is something these people don't do.

#### *4.1.2 Positioning others; storyworld characters being positioned as makers.*

Later in the same event Liz positions herself, and her co-workers as makers. The preceding topicality had featured the group of key participants discussing their feelings of working together. Liz tells this story of how she was questioned about the project by a visitor:

##### *Extract 4.5*

130) Liz: 'cos I think another jeweller  
 131) asked the question - erm ↑don't you do that anyway↑ this process  
 132) push your own work and ideas as a maker you know almost  
 133) ↑aren't you supposed to do that as your job?↑ - and my response  
 134) was well yeah I don't think I'd trust myself to do it as perhaps  
 135) honestly or accurately because if ones needs (unclear word)  
 136) and having a conversation with y'self I can choose to listen to  
 137) whatever I want or edit and and y'know make er - er lead you all on  
 138) or lead myself on - so I still have that control but I think if I and  
 139) I because I've done it with others three other makers everything's there I  
 140) haven't had to

Liz is clearly aligning to the category of maker as it is spoken on lines 132 and 139. But in using the word she is also positioning others in her story. I will start with her second use at line 139 as it is more straightforward. The utterance is part of her answer to the question, prefaced and asked across lines 130-133. From the context of the talk, the inference can be made that she is referring to

the other key participants as “other makers” (139). She is positioning them as makers and the use of ‘other’ implies other to herself, reinforcing her own self positioning as a maker. It is plausible that this, as well as ‘merely’ positioning characters, is signalling group affiliation and social cohesion, thus bringing together discreet practices.

Liz is saying these words, but importantly, lines 131-133 are reported speech. She is ventriloquising another’s voice, which is the question asked by ‘another jeweller’, prefaced in line 130. The other jeweller is questioning Liz about her work. Liz has categorised her storyworld interlocutor as a jeweller, a salient category to maker and the broader context of the event and other participants and visitors, thus is locally relevant. But the category she utters on the jeweller’s behalf is “maker” (132). So we have to ask if the jeweller ‘really’ said maker or whether Liz has elected to position herself by reselecting the category ascribed to the subject in the storyworld question. Through using the story, has Liz (a jeweller) shifted herself to become a maker?

This extract has shown how Liz has positioned someone other than one of the exhibiting artists as a maker. Haley had earlier sought to categorise the members of the gallery organisation as makers, but equally, being a maker is shown to be substantiated by positing an idea of ‘the other’, often vaguely, as ‘people’.

In the next excerpt, Jane seeks to align herself to being a maker. She does this in a comparable way to John, by using verbs and actions and implying category-bound activities. Jane has just challenged the representation of the project’s development as a linear timeline drawn on the large chalkboard in the space as an aid to explaining the project.

#### *Extract 4.6*

78) *Jane*: whereas I think a lot of creative people think sort of more rhizomically  
 79) (sic) - so it’s from the ↑centre kind of outwards↑  
 80) - and I know in writing that I’ve been doing recently - kind of essays  
 81) I’ve been writing them from the middle outwards struggling with erm how that  
 82) contradicts the sort of seeming order of how you write an essay and I was  
 83) thinking that in terms of practice because it helped me with my writing  
 84) when I decided that um - that I was ↑making essays↑  
 85) - once I’d decided I was ↑making essays↑.



I argue that Jane is seeking to position herself within or amongst the maker category. The key participants have oriented to the position in the local business of interaction. And perhaps as relevant is the greater contextual relevance that they are here because they are makers and have been making, it's what the exhibition is. Her solution to her problems with writing, set out in lines 78-81, was that she "decided that um I was *making* essays" can now be seen as an act of positioning (Davies & Harré 1990), and seeking affiliation to the key participants possibly "driven by a desire to conform and be similar to others" (Widdicombe 1998: 59). By referring to making, Jane is alluding to her history as a jeweller and orienting to the use of 'maker' in the immediate interactional context. I also infer that Jane, as an educator, is aware of the use of the word in broader discourses, too.

Jane later asks what the gallery management had been like to work with. This occasions some criticism from John. Soon after this excerpt, Haley qualifies his criticisms, saying they were good to work with:

*Extract 4.7*

- 211) *Jane*: what about the trust on the part of the gallery to take the exhibition  
 212) without knowing what it was or - or when did you define it in some way  
 213) *Haley*: hmm hmm I know/  
 214) *John*: /I think it's about time they did something like that  
 215) *Jane*: ↑absolutely↑  
 216) *John*: 'cos it's got really boring here yeah sometimes and I think  
 217) they should have a responsibility to do something a bit/ more  
 218) *Jane*: /or trust makers to do/  
 219) *John*: /trust makers to do something 'cos we-  
 220) *Haley*: but we but/  
 221) *John*: /we're not gonna  
                   - y'know ↑bugger it all up↑

The first part of the excerpt, lines 211-217, show the interactional cotext prefacing what is of interest: Jane's use of the maker category. This moment follows on well after her comment on making an essay but her apparent answer to John's stated criticism or frustration is suggesting that people like him should be trusted to play more of a part (218). Her reference and suggestion can be read as Jane advocating the empowering of 'makers' in the relationship with the gallery. John immediately orients himself to the position by repeating 'maker', and Haley orients herself and others to it with the plural pronoun, we. By making available 'makers', Jane appears to do much for local affiliation in that she affords

John and Haley the opportunity to orient to the category, as well as positively evaluating the category herself. The gallery, or those who run it, are cast as a mildly adversarial context for the affiliation by all three speakers through the interaction.

In this section I have shown how, in this particular piece of data, the key participants can be seen to position themselves as makers as an identity category. I argue that this is a telling case (Mitchell 1987: 237). This they do by explicit lexical choice of ‘maker’ but also by working with the verb form of the word to index their professional category-bound activities. As a categorising device (Schegloff 2007) the makers make available formulations and categories for those who are not makers. Affiliatory bonds are worked-up through using plural pronouns ‘we’, and signalling agreement during interactional events. It is also seen as a category, recognised and aligned to by others not involved in the making of the exhibition. Jane uses the concept to position herself in the situation by invoking her troubles with writing essays, and by recognising John’s frustration with the gallery. In the next section I show how the participants further loosen their identities from an overarching, canonical ascription of craft, as they work to position what they do amongst other creative practices.

#### *4.1.3 Work done to align the category of maker to other creative practices.*

I have shown in the previous sections how the participants position themselves as makers, seemingly electing to work with the word ‘make’ rather than any variant or correlate of ‘craft’. I argue in this section that this affords the capacity to open up what they do and who they are. The argument that I pursue is that it allows them to position themselves in, or align themselves to a more diverse landscape of creative practices which ‘the crafts’ might not allow. Here I show how John seeks to evoke what I shall gloss as ‘making as an enlarged domain’. The analysis ranges over the next three excerpts, which follow consecutively in the data, but are more clearly shown here as distinct excerpts. They follow the interaction in the previous section when John had voiced his frustration with the gallery:

## Extract 4.8

- 237) *Ben*: Well I think that's what's wrong with the sector -  
 238) there's not enough dialogue like this goes on amongst ↑makers  
 themselves↑.  
 239) Just sit around and sit like this and talk and talk there needs to be more of it.  
 240) *John*: but also not just with makers though-  
 241) *Ben*: -well whoever /yeah  
 242) *John*: /cos that's sort of  
           fencing y'self in -  
 243) while we're talking about this and all our other interests I'm sure everyone  
 244) round here has lots more interests in sort of dance and choreography and in  
 245) music and and cooking and gardening all sorts of ways of dealing with  
 246) the kind of fluidities and the kind of way that time happens through material  
 247) how we kind of push stuff about to kind of make our world.

This chunk follows on from a short episode in which John had extolled the value of the makers' ongoing conversations amongst themselves as the chief reason for having not thought of themselves as a surprising combination of collaborators, as the gallery reportedly had. Ben, one of the visitors to the event offers a sort of evaluation to John's narrative utterances: "there's not enough dialogue like this goes on amongst makers themselves" (238). Ben, an arts administrator, is orienting to the category of 'maker'. Like Jane, Ben used to be a crafts practitioner, but here his orientation to the term does not seem to involve a self-identity claim beyond a possible empathy with the makers. John offers a qualification: "not just with makers though" in the next line. He then goes on to list a range of domestic and artistic creative practices that on his account are defined in lines 246-7: "dealing with / the kind of fluidities and the kind of way that time happens through material / how we kind of push stuff about to kind of make our world". John's use of the pronoun 'we' and the possessive in close collocation to make in 'make our world', as well as his references to time and material, mark these lines as a plurally-oriented description of a working process. (The group's approach to the concept 'process' is picked up more thoroughly in the next section.) This description has been applied to his seemingly disparate list of practices over the preceding lines, thus linking his/their approach to the other practices by way of time, material, and actions.

So from the notion of 'makers', John has sought to align what he and the other makers do by invoking a list of domestic and artistic creative categories. He appears to acknowledge that he is a maker and possibly 'fencing in' his own disposition by his repetition of Ben's "makers themselves". But he seeks an

expansive view, rather than “fencing y’self in”, by uniting his list of disparate practices with a generic or poetic description of how a maker, on his terms, works.

The last five lines of the previous excerpt are repeated to contextualise Haley’s utterance:

*Extract 4.9*

- 243) *John*: while we’re talking about this and all our other interests I’m sure  
everyone  
244) round here has lots more interests in sort of dance and choreography and in  
245) music and and cooking and gardening all sorts of ways of dealing with  
246) the kind of fluidities and the kind of way that time happens through material  
247) how we kind of push stuff about to kind of make our world.  
248) *Haley*: and I think actually we haven’t spoken about this as a group but  
249) we’re obviously all thinking different things about this but I’ve certainly been  
thinking  
250) that that’s next stage of it really is to get it out in in probably into different  
251) places that are intrigued or involved in process.

Haley’s utterance, from line 249, echoes both the topic and the structure of John’s lines. I suggest that John’s description of how makers work, “time happens through material” (246), is summarised and paralleled in Haley’s “process” (251). Haley’s “group” (248) reflects John’s use of “we’re” and “everyone” (line 243). Haley’s next summary-parallel is how she moves the talk on under her own terms. All of the domestic and creative practices that John lists are, I suggest, condensed within “different things” (249) and “different places” (250). Haley is also aligning to the ‘maker’ category as it has been used by John in “how we kind of push stuff about to kind of make our world” (247). Haley uses John’s negative assessment of craft to re-present and reformulate her view that in turn was a reformulation of John’s list. This is the only use of the word craft in the hour of data that informs this chapter, as the participants have coalesced around a theme of ‘maker’, and extended this to other practices that on their terms are contiguous, being predicated upon temporal and material matters. The negative assessment of crafts as something to “get away from” underpins the moves to align to other categories. John is using ‘crafts’ in the sense of the institutional craftworld.

*Extract 4.10*

252) *John*: ↑Get away from crafts↑.

253) *Haley*: - no it's not to get away from it but it's to share something else about it

254) you know the ↑musical thing↑

255) all of that the ↑material thing↑

256) all of those things that are just so strong.

Haley qualifies John's assessment by wanting to share "something else about it", cohering to the earlier chunk by again reformulating but this time in a more condensed utterance. Haley appeals to the group 'you know' (254). If Haley is addressing John directly, she is clearly aligning to him as a knowing recipient, appealing to his social and discourse position as a maker. Haley's orienting to, and consequent inhabiting of John's expanded field of practices can be seen to be worked to some sort of conclusion not many lines later.

*Extract 4.11*

282) *Haley*. It was interesting when we saw Steve Reich talk before

283) at the Royal Festival Hall - before Christmas and he talked of his wife

284) - and 'cos she was is a textile artist -

285) so and so again this musician was very involved in process and time

286) and um all the things that I feel that I'm interested in he could then talk

287) about making from her perspective as well of making textile weaving.

Haley uses narrative to underpin the veracity of her recent claims. The story provides evidence from 'real life' to back her claims for makers in general, and herself in particular. She is positioning herself and makers in a broader context. Again, the orienting to 'we' involves telling-world protagonists and casts them as story-world characters. This perhaps reinforces the 'truth' of her story by signalling its shared basis in experience. For the character to repudiate the story might damage affiliative bonds built during the event, and, importantly, in the face of the audience. The general context of the event is centred on the key participants having worked together and thus presenting, more or less, a unified face. What I think is interesting is having set up some conditions that define makers' concerns and practices, glossed here as 'process and time' (285), Haley 'fits' the musician to these.

The choice of musician is telling. Steve Reich is normally described as a contemporary classical composer. It is difficult to make any assumption about who present would be familiar with him but it is the 'type' of composer that he is that matters more here. To some extent, Haley is positioning herself, identifying herself as someone who appreciates a particular music genre. It is the sort of genre that might well carry with it some cultural heft in the present context, and Haley fits *it* to *her* concerns.

This is not to negatively assess Haley's motivations in this moment as some kind of bragging, she is clearly interested enough in Steve Reich to go and see him perform and then talk about it in her own time. But the point is there is social value in her positioning herself in this way. She does this by calling up the fact that his wife is a textile artist, a category or practice that would be seen as contiguous to Haley, especially as we have seen that the key participants are keen to be seen as people outside of their disciplinary boundaries. According to the story, Reich is interested in "process and time" (as ventriloquised by Haley), not just on his terms as a musician, but through his ability to talk about his wife's work at the storyworld event: "he could then talk about making from her perspective" (286-7).

Haley has used Reich's ability to talk about his wife as a way to position what she does as contiguous to his concerns. Through the excerpt, Haley has drawn categorical focus, or the focus on what subject positions are made relevant, away from John's utterance of "craft" toward a field that has cultural significance i.e. classical music. She has fitted her concept of maker to another creative field.

#### *4.1.4 Orienting the category of 'maker' to a speaker's needs.*

In the previous section, Haley fitted her conceptualisation of being a maker to a category outside the immediate context of contemporary craft. Here, Rachel fits 'making' to her own needs and professional context.

In these lines we see Rachel position her professional activities in terms of 'making' by deploying a speculative narrative. Rachel uses what *might* happen to orient to the key participants by fitting making to her requirements.

*Extract 4.12*

261) *Rachel*: we gonna - the materials library will be based at that next level  
 262) and for us one of the thoughts is to be the materials library  
 263) ↑in the institute of making↑ -  
 264) - but for us making is from the molecule to the building and everything  
 265) in between - and you'll come and it'll be the material scientist the  
 266) furniture maker all the people who make things it could be a piece of music -  
 267) I mean we had (well-known musician) in the library looking at material stuff  
 268) but this is - y'know processes

“Materials” (261) is deployed as a hook to take the floor as a repetition of the topicality of Haley’s preceding lines concerning the materials library. Having gained the floor, Rachel then aligns to the principal category, or concept of making and makers by positioning her project within the institute of making. As used here, making is not a correlate or alternative formulation for craft as oriented to by the key participants, but rather a more generic use of the term that could afford the incorporation of craft. This point is made by Rachel in setting out her position in line 264: “but for us making is from the molecule to the building and everything in between”. Having established her own meaning of making, she moves to include the participants in her mental model of her project through the strategy of a small speculative narrative (265-266). Rachel’s definition is very broad in scope, worked-up in scale or magnitude-related metaphor. In some ways it is as indistinct as the other foregoing uses of ‘maker’, never really tightly defined. But this is the function of both types of vagueness. For John and his colleagues it left the door open to associate with other types of creative practice. For Rachel it also affords the possibility of multiple future connections. I re-present Rachel’s narrative lines here:

*Extract 4.13 (a part of 4.12)*

265) *Rachel*: and you'll come and it'll be the material scientist the  
 266) furniture maker all the people who make things it could be a piece of music  
 267) I mean we had (well-known musician) in the library looking at material stuff  
 268) but this is - y'know processes

It can be glossed as an appeal for people like those she is currently with to come and work in the institute. Rachel appeals to the group through “you’ll”. Her use of two quite specific disciplines in material scientist and furniture maker might be an anaphoric addition to John’s list of practices earlier in 244-245. But she quickly

expands specificity to generality with “all the people who make things” (266), thus aligning again to the making and maker categorisation. She then expands her view with a lexical repetition of “music” as uttered by John in the earlier excerpt (245), and of course repeating Haley’s recent usage. Rachel’s speculation is ratified with a very short exemplum that could conceivably be categorised as a past event narrative, as it places a storyworld character (the musician) on axes of time and place. We see Rachel qualify her uses of “material” with the conjunction “but” immediately after her very short exemplum narrative. Through this she re-aligns to a notion of process as a key concept worked up by the participants in previous talk. Structurally this coheres with Haley’s last utterance at line 251 “process”. But also, I suggest, interactionally, it allows Rachel to align to the key participants’ concerns by indicating that the materials library is potentially one of Haley’s places “intrigued or involved in process” (251).

In this section it is shown how the participants have used the category of maker to position themselves. Talk has afforded the means to form professional identities as part of local, ongoing business. By attending to professionally situated micro discourse, it is apparent that those at the event choose to identify with a particular category. ‘Maker’ has relevance in craft’s discourses, the participants have not formulated something new. However, neither have they each ascribed or taken up identities specific to their particular specialisms, such as jewellery or lecturing. The potentially more diffuse meanings of maker have enabled some coalescence of distinct individual practices. It enables affiliation amongst the speakers as they position self and others within and beyond the local context.

The concept of process, and how it is worked up by the participants, has been alluded to in this section and I turn to look more fully at how the concept of process is formulated by the participants in the following section.



#### **4.2 The joint construction of a concept ‘process’ through the process of talk.**

An observation of this research is that talk about making things – that is, direct reference to the techniques and procedures of craft making, figures infrequently across all the data (but see 8.2.5 on generalisability). Rather, I frame this as a telling case counter to typifications that would have ceramicists talking amongst themselves about kiln temperatures, and woodworkers discussing chisel sharpening. This qualifies and departs from Tanya Harrod’s concern that beyond discipline-specific technical literature there was a lack of “a common language that made sense of this multiplicity of activities” (Harrod 1999:409). Although writing about the field of the 1970s, Harrod’s words can be seen as emblematic of the disparities between craft’s hegemonic narratives and discourse in situated professional life. Despite Harrod’s concern, there is clearly a substantial amount to be said amongst crafts practitioners, here. It’s just that very little of what is spoken about at the local level is normatively described as ‘craft knowledge’ as making things. And so the claim can be made that what the participants speak about in this particular episode of unrehearsed talk (and mirrored across the data) is counter to the hegemonic and structuring narratives of craft’s literature.

Many of the participants have been shown to coalesce around the identity category of ‘maker’. We can infer that they are presenting a particular face to the world and orienting and aligning to a range of interlocutor positions. This type of setting does not necessarily imply a need to ‘go technical’ with the talk. But it is equally plausible that one or more might be talking about how things are made, and, based only in my own experience of these events, it is not unusual for at least one visitor to bring up a ‘how to’ line of questioning, asking about techniques and materials. Other data in my research would tend to support the claim that when amongst peers, technical talk does not figure in conversation. I would summarise the contrast between overall topical content as not being about ‘how to’, but rather discussing the ‘conditions by which to’.

I briefly explain why I have decided to analyse how ‘process’, in particular, is deployed in the data. Firstly, it is a concept that has relevance through this hour of data, with explicit reference to process(es) is made twenty-four times. As a quantitative comparison, the terms ‘maker’ and ‘making’ were used twenty-nine times between them in the same data. In addition to direct lexical use of ‘process(es)’, some chunks or episodes of data allude to the concept of process,

which I interpret as the procedural or gradual, temporally registered emergence of work(s) , without explicit lexical reference. Secondly, as a small way to interrogate the orthodox literature: Process is a word that describes something of what craft-making is; procedurally bringing change to material(s) by the actions of tools and techniques; it should find some relevance in what crafts practitioners talk about. The orthodox view on this in the crafts literature is to take this to mean technical talk and descriptions of skill (see Frayling and Snowden 1984, for example). It is an attempt to see how 'process' is deployed in the unrehearsed talk-in-interaction of situated practice. Briefly looking at the craft literature, two recent texts on the subject, both by art historians (Adamson 2007, and Risatti 2007), feature 'process' once in their indexes and both index it as 'process art' – an art historical movement. By contrast, Marchand (2016) features texts from a broad range of disciplines including anthropologists, researchers of craft, and designer-makers. 'Process' is in a group of words that is indexed numerous times, along with 'tools', 'technique', and 'limitation'. Its index-count is only exceeded by 'learning', and 'knowledge'.

I will show how the word itself is deployed and worked with by the participants; how the word's meaning remains fluid and mutable, yet uncontested amongst interlocutors, maintaining an apparent stability of meaning amongst the talk. I start by showing a very brief extract exhibiting what might be called an orthodox usage. I then show a number of extracts where 'process' is used to afford different ends for speakers. The way that 'process' is deployed also aids positioning as an ongoing accomplishment.

#### *4.2.1 An orthodox meaning of process.*

'Process' is collocated alongside the word 'making' in two excerpts, and in both cases it is John who is speaking:

##### *Extract 4.14*

31) *John*; that's a thing that reflects about making processes as well and

64) *John*: erm, sort of conversational kind of thing going on in the making process

In lines 31 and 64 John uses the two words together in what I would argue is a very strong association. 'Making' and 'process' register as something close to a

compound word. He is aligning the act(s) of making to the notion of process through their collocation. We can see that for John the idea of process in these two instances is freighted with the physical actions of making, of procedural practical work. We can read this as being in line with an orthodox view on what process might mean in the crafts, which is closely allied to making, procedural practical work.

But if we think from the other end of the compound *making process*, John is equally signalling that making is processual i.e. temporally, or perhaps, sequentially registered. The fact that he has uttered the two words together is of some interest. This is because both utterances still make the same linguistic sense if 'process' is omitted. John could have just said 'making' as the subject of his speaking but instead is emphasising that, for him, making is linked to process, that it is durational. In summary, the processes of craft involve making, and making is embedded in time; an orthodox understanding. John's thinking is aligned to a conventional stance and quite tightly defined. Many of the makers signal an orientation to concepts of time, duration, and temporality through the data. I have set it up here as an arguably orthodox meaning from which other locally available meanings might deviate.

In the following extract John starts to define 'process' in terms that do not correlate so readily with an orthodox view.

#### 4.2.2 A socially-oriented meaning of process.

##### *Extract 4.15*

- 31) *John*; that's a thing that reflects about making processes as well, the  
 32) exhibition is a work in progress -  
 36) so the show is kind of a working process and we wanted the conversations to  
 37) be part of that working process so that we could have the response of people  
 38) and to kind of if you like carry on working with people who were coming to  
     see it/  
 39) *Liz*: /yeah yes/  
 40) *John*:               /as a kind of conversation thing

The context of the data events needs to be considered: This isn't to negate the work John is doing but the exhibition is of a jointly-made project, something that might be glossed as collaborative working. This inevitably frames the gallery talks' topicality and social context. Here we can see the overall ethos of the

project being extended to the talks. The extract follows some lines from Jane, who evaluates the series of gallery talks (as opposed to the normative single talk) positively, embracing dialogue and involvement. So the idea of talk is already topically present in the prior cotext.

The making processes of line 31, which I suggest characterise an orthodox understanding of craftwork as procedural and practical, proceed as the usage becomes more diffuse. The show, archetypically constituted as a finished, static artefact, is discontinuous with John's idea of process. "So the show is a kind of working process" (line 36). By expanding the concept of process, it shifts away from the insular, solo workbench, the craftsperson invested in a singular pursuit, and toward the public and interactional realm of the gallery. It also shifts in time, from what happened *then* at the workbench to embracing the ongoing present of *now* at the gallery, inviting future change-making. John does this through his utterance at line 36-7: "we wanted the conversations to be part of that working process". John has drawn 'making' away from the bench and into the gallery, he has moved it in time to the narrating present. Making, on his terms, has become necessarily more social and he is advocating the inter-subjective involvement of others, referencing "the response of people" (37). Here we can see making processes as an expanded concept being as inter-textual. This can be seen condensed in line 40, "as a kind of conversation thing", a theme that John later picks up on in his utterance at line 64: "erm, sort of conversational kind of thing going on in the making process". The working practices thus far experienced and done in common amongst the group of key participants have afforded a level of cohesion and affiliation. John, with an agreement from Liz's "yeah" (39) is proposing a way that might be extended to the visitors. Of interest is that what John sees as the work needing to be done to progress things isn't 'making things' or 'doing craft', but socially organised talk as a form of artistic labour: "the response of people...working with people...conversation thing"

John's words can be read as a counter to craft's normative assumptions. He has moved to expand the notion of 'making process' to include the exhibition, normatively static, as a site of possible change. However, as the earlier lines show, he has also aligned to more conventional views, and does so again later at line 410 where he references "skilled processes".

*Extract 4.16*

410) *John*: And consider all the options and put things together in a sort of  
thoughtful

411) manner and then all of a sudden use skilled processes in which we become  
412) able to trust.

So far, 'process' has been used by one person in what could be described as a more or less conventional sense, and in a way that embraces open-ended social interaction. Next, Liz uses process to argue for cognitive activities; a third local meaning in a compact piece of data.

*4.2.3 Orienting to a cognitive meaning of process.*

The term can be shown to be deployed as something quite different to conventional notions of practical action in a coherently argued exposition from Haley. In the following excerpt 'process' becomes dissociated from making as per John's usage, (although note the near collocation of *thoughtful* in line 408, above). This extract follows directly from the excerpt in the previous section, in which Haley had told a short story about hearing the musician Steve Reich speak. She used this narrative to align her concerns toward those of other creative practitioners; evidently those concerned with time, process, and making.

*Extract 4.17*

288) *Haley*: so you know it is a ↑thinking process↑ rather than - I think that's what

289) it is for me it's about a thinking process not an outcome/

290) *Liz*: /yeah yeah

291) *Haley*: but all of our work is seen in outcomes so you -

292) ninety percent of what I do during the year is about the thinking process

293) and the process - probably more than that actually and

294) ↑five percent↑ is about the individual object being out there -

295) um and I don't y'know even going down to how you make a living or what

296) you do I make my living from the process not from the outcome

In this extract Haley is using process in a different way to John: she has collocated it with "thinking", with the apparent effect of locating process as a cerebral, rather than practical activity. She is challenging hegemonic assumptions on two counts: firstly, by locating process in the mind, and secondly,

by distancing her aspirations for what she does from the normative expectations of “outcomes” (289 & 296), typified by “the individual object being out there” (294). Haley is positioning herself as a certain type of practitioner through orienting to ‘process’ but finding in it affordances to present herself in a particular way. The implication is that considerable mental labour goes into her work that is then represented by the “five percent” (294) (of labour) that is embodied or embedded in her crafted artefacts. On the other hand, there is some similarity to how John has found use in process. Both he and Haley have shifted from a hegemonic characterisation of process as practical labour to, in John’s case, talk; social interaction as labour, and in Haley’s case, thinking as labour. In both cases however, it can be argued that these kinds of labour typically remain invisible in the face of “the outcome” as the object on a gallery plinth. Both are in a sense advocating (for) the kind of work going on in these gallery conversations.

It is worth noting the immediately preceding context of Haley’s utterance: this was the passage when she talked about having seen Steve Reich. There is no way of knowing how aware of Reich’s work Haley is, but Reich has written of how he wants the musical process and structure of a work to reveal itself as part of the listening experience (Schwarz 1996: 11).

Haley is making a clear link between process and mental activity through the triple collocation of thinking and process at (288, 289, & 292). It would be tempting to view this as an opposing view to the shorthand view of John’s ‘making processes’, i.e. mental vs manual. But the opposition that Haley sets up is of “outcome(s)” (289, 291, & 296). She is not distancing her position from making, as an active concept, but rather from the relative stasis of outcomes; made objects and artworks. (Elsewhere in the data, and discussed in chapter seven, Haley makes clear declarations of her affinity to materials and materiality). In some ways Haley’s stance can be viewed as sharing considerable conceptual freight with John’s move to portray the gallery show not as a fixed event, but as a site for change and intervention. This excerpt, in its physical context, can be seen as a response to what Haley can see around her. It is important that the physical context of this turn is a gallery space, typically populated with outcomes; the things the makers had made.

#### 4.2.4 Drawing together the concepts of maker and process.

All of the participants have spoken of the project in terms of change, contingency, and temporality. John draws together the concepts of materiality and time in the lines:

*Extract 4.18 (a part of 4.9)*

245) *John*: dealing with  
 246) the kind of fluidities and the kind of way that time happens through material  
 247) how we kind of push stuff about to kind of make our world.

Although not explicitly referenced, John's allusion to a concept of process is evident in these lines by his bringing together of 'material, time, fluidities', and "make" (247). His attitude to making processes is echoed in his calling up of "material". By the metaphorical use of 'through', time is made tangible, time is figuratively materialised. John presents a particular imagery in this utterance around his metaphor or allusion of fluidity. His 'dynamic' theme is extended in the words time happens through material, and push stuff.

He invokes the group through his use of 'we' and 'our'; both words cotextually within the same clause to 'make'. 'Make' therefore possibly determines the "we" and "our" that John is referencing as those who have aligned to the notion of maker. How far this group inclusivity extends beyond the artists themselves and out to a broader horizon of the other participants is unclear.

Rachel utters the following lines shortly afterwards, though:

*Extract 4.19 (a part of 4.13).*

266) *Rachel*: I mean we had (artist's name) in the library looking at material stuff  
 267) but this is - y'know processes.

These lines have figured earlier in the chapter as part of a discussion of alignment to the category of 'maker'. Here, Rachel is also aligning to the idea of 'process' that has been emerging amongst the group as somehow further qualifying or defining 'maker'. John's invocation had been to 'we' and 'our'. I suggest that Rachel plays down her first clause with "I mean" and elevates her second clause with "y'know". In this way she suppresses the position of materials (emphasised through the association of the well-known artist), then qualifies her

position with “but” to allow the re-alignment to the others via “y’know” to valourise processes.

I have argued that Haley voiced opposition to the static nature of exhibited outcomes. She was contrasting the invisibility of a “thinking process” to “our work seen in outcomes”. Rachel’s words are performing a similar function by separating actions from artefacts. She uses the cultural capital and leverage of mentioning a well-known artist. But any hint of this being a boast is qualified with the almost immediate “but”. She appears to be elevating the group’s advocacy of processes above the passive observer role played by the artist. The use of the contraction “y’know” could be seen as a filler but equally the personal nature of “y” could be a strategy to align herself to the artists through this sharing of opinion and knowledge. In this way a visitor known to the artists is aligning herself to the ongoing joint construction of the concept of process. She is contributing to the group-work by identifying and aligning to their concerns.

A concept of process has also been invoked without deploying the term itself. In a similar way to the work done by the key participants in aligning to the category of maker, the use of process can be seen as part of the work done by the group of makers throughout the data to align themselves to an ecology of practices and professions much broader than orthodox representations of craft practices afford. It is worked quite succinctly by Liz just a few lines before Haley’s utterance:

*Extract 4.20*

269) *Liz*: to add to that it’s why then process is so  
 270) ↑it’s the star in the object isn’t it↑ it’s the key that links everything  
 271) and then doesn’t separate makers from other disciplines or from life itself  
 272) because we all know it’s not like that.

The participants use the deployment of ‘process’ to work up a collectivised worldview of adjacent practices, for example: choreography, gardening, cooking, and music. It connects them to a sphere of practices where outcomes are often dematerialised and is simultaneously used to distance themselves from the normative assumptions of a gallery environment such as ‘outcomes’.

The term ‘process’ occurs throughout the data providing a resource for certain participants to position themselves and their working practices and to critique normative assumptions. The word is used in clear association with time, material, thinking, making, and working, but no singular definition arises from the group



talk – nor does one seem needed. Meaning is unpacked and evolved in each episode, appearing to have varying indexical resonances in different parts of the text.

The concept serves as an example of how “the sense of talk is always local and that generalisation about the meaning of a word is impossible” (Coulon 1995). In the examples so far I have shown how ‘process’ has allowed Haley to communicate something particular about her working practices. John has expanded its definition in an expository episode about the exhibition, but this has been done in the context of his other uses being somewhat more orthodox. Rachel has oriented her concerns and practices toward the key participants through a very small exemplum narrative and Liz has used it to underpin John’s ‘expanded field’ to position making within a broad ecology of “other disciplines, or from life itself” (271). The concept of process is used with a flexibility of meaning embedded in its cotext and occasioning, allowing the participants to establish meaning as the business of the event unfolds, enabling social cohesion as the participants present themselves. This can be seen as contrastive to the tighter or at least more consistent definitions of word-use that are required in either academic writing or rehearsed speech.

### **4.3 Conclusions.**

In this chapter I have shown two key things: firstly, how various participants have used, and oriented to a particular professional identity: maker. This is accomplished through the interactional practice of positioning (Davies & Harré 1990) as an integrated aspect of telling small stories (Bamberg 2004, Georgakopoulou 2007). ‘Maker’ is made relevant as a category (Schegloff 2007), it is used by participants to name themselves and others as makers, and also as a verb form by referencing to doing of “making” and “writing” to signal category-bound activities. Being a maker is further substantiated by calling up other categories in the same interactional episodes. These other identity categories do the speakers’ work by establishing a sense of ‘other’ in the talk; ‘customers’ or ‘people who don’t make’. As opposing categories they tend to embody a negative evaluation. However, categories that are ‘other’ to being a maker are also invoked by the participants to work-up more positively evaluated associations. An outward-looking view of creative practices is established that embraces ‘art’

categories such as ‘choreography’, but also more mundane domestic categories such as ‘cooking’.

Making is conceptually related to process, as it can be defined as procedurally bringing about change to a material with technologies, process is therefore relevant to craft’s orthodox definitions. Process is also locally relevant in the data and is spoken about by several participants. But it is evident that its meaning is fluid and mutable. In the analysis it is shown to be used in a way that might be thought off as more or less conventional, as collocated with making. Haley situates process as a cognitive activity, shifting it from its procedural, material meaning. Liz and John both adopt socially inclusive uses as the exhibition itself and its visitors are drawn into a process-based approach, and Liz maintains that process is ‘the star...the key that links everything’.

These meanings are not the product of a carefully crafted manifesto or position paper, but contingent meanings worked up interactionally through the mundanity of talk. Enough resonance and meaning is afforded to get each interlocutor to the next ‘now’. It is interesting that none of the uses, oscillating as they do between concerns of temporality, materials, sociality, and other differences, are ever contested or disputed amongst the participants. Unpacking is neither requested nor offered. Meaning is made jointly through the practices of local, contextually-dependent interaction. In this way the concept has a doubly-bound investment in context. Certainly the speaker brings meaning along but new contingent understandings are forged in the mix of being there, in the now.

Despite positioning as ‘makers’ and working-up multiple affordances of the word ‘process’ none of the talk is explicitly about making things in a technical or didactic mode. The matters of how to make seem to be absent from the participants’ talk. Although ‘making’, in conventional terms at least, is not topically relevant in the data, I argue that talk in these situations is enabling artistic labour, and simply *is* artistic labour, disrupting canonical assumptions that “nothing that is important about craft can be put into words” (Dormer 1997: 219).

In the first part of the chapter I addressed a foundational and persistent topic in the crafts literature: identity. The crafts literature has often sought to establish an identity for craft in relationship to fields such as design and fine art (eg Adamson 2007, 2012, Rissatti 2007, Greenhalgh 2002). In the data we can see the participants making relevant relational identities for themselves too, but by positioning (Davis & Harré 1990) through the social contingencies of talk-in-

interaction as interlocutors manage local affairs in the 'now'. In some ways they are doing something analogous to the relational work achieved in the writings of the craft literature, in that they appear to position themselves by the implication of categories of 'other'. The idea of becoming a maker through spoken situated interaction is amplified by the invocation of other categories such as customers, or people who don't make. This is congruent with forming a community of practice: "A community of practice is determined in terms of the members' subjective experience of the boundaries between their community and other communities" (Meyerhoff 2004: 526)

I have showed participants engaging in social work to establish and coalesce around a position of 'maker'. In the next chapter I continue to use positioning in small stories. I show how some of the participants augment or underpin their positions by working up the idea of being different as an aspect of critical self-awareness. In some ways this is a development of the 'other' categories shown in this chapter. I show how this work is done implicitly through symbolic means that invoke hegemonic narratives through the telling of counter-narratives (Giroux et al 1996, Bamberg 2004). I also show how narratives are deployed to exemplify critical positions and arguments.

## **Chapter five. Counter-narratives and exempla: small stories enabling reflection and critical awareness.**

### **5.0 Introduction.**

The analysis in this chapter continues to work with positioning and shows how small stories in interaction can further underpin positioning by affording a layer of critical self-awareness to the local discourse. In chapter four I presented the case that participants identified themselves and positioned themselves in a professional landscape by aligning with the lexical choice of ‘maker’ and the concept of process. In this chapter I suggest that positioning, or orienting to a category in talk, can be underpinned by the explicit or tacit portrayal or construction of ‘the other’ in the stories. By this way the initial position is triangulated by other categories. The concern with ‘being different’, begun in chapter four, is developed in this chapter by showing how counter-narratives and narratives-as-exempla draw on (sometimes indexical) resources to reinforce the concept of being a maker.

I extend the discussion by considering *why* (as well as *how*) they do this and consider ideas of being different and individuality and suggest that these are attributes expected of a creative arts professional. This orients the discussion and analysis toward chapter six. In chapter six I show ways in which the participants perform their selves in these particular contexts. In this way talk, as it unfolds, appears to be doing or enabling creative labour for the participants. In addition to the job of retrospectively reporting on the project as a whole to the visitors, talk can be seen to continuously structure things being done in the present such as forming ideas and staging the self.

#### **5.0.1 Outline of the chapter.**

In this chapter I address the question:

*How do more symbolic language practices underpin positioning as creative professionals? (1.1.2).*

The chapter is in three parts: I begin in 5.1 by showing how the group of key participants establish and maintain their position as variant or at odds with what I will suggest are (for those at the events) tacitly understood modes of orthodox

behaviour. I suggest that some of participants' small stories can be viewed as counter-narratives (Giroux et al 1996, Bamberg 2004) told against the master narratives that shape practices and cultural expectations. In 5.2 positions and perspectives contrary to orthodox expectations are deployed using narrative's ability to present verisimilitude (Bruner 1986). They are used as exempla to make plausible certain claims and positions. One of the things that can be taken from these analyses is that at various points in the data, work is done by particular participants that puts forward a collective view that somehow amounts to 'we are different from *them*'. In addition, in some instances there can be detected something like an oscillation, as some of the participants articulate a more individuated voice amongst the consensus. These occasional moves to more explicitly individuated positions add the extra layer of 'not only are we different, but *I* am different from us'. In this way, positioning is reinforced through establishing opposing positions and categories. However, another effect might be to weaken group affiliation.

Most of the small stories in sections 5.1 and 5.2 were deployed as resources, bolstering positions or substantiating arguments. The story is cotextually bound to the ongoing interaction but any arguments being substantiated are seemingly pre-formulated by the teller, following a schema of 'here's my point of view and this little episode we saw proves it': As a general schema, the story is subservient to the point being made. In Section 5.3 I show how stories are more instrumental as the stuff of argument as talk unfolds in interaction. Firstly, I show that small stories can engender reflection, thus breaking from the convention (see Bamberg 2004, Georgakopoulou 2007, Freeman 2007, Helsig 2010) that reflective distance is particular to big stories. Secondly, small stories can be seen to be future-oriented, as by telling them, hypotheses and future possibilities are articulated.

### **5.1 Positioning accomplished by telling counternarratives.**

I have shown in chapter four that for many of the participants at this event, the concept of 'maker', its correlate 'making', and that the concept of making is deployed as a positioning or identity strategy. This is done amongst those present, and also indexes a broader contextual ecology. In that discussion the argument relied on lexical choice embedded in narrative and how the telling of a narrative underpinned those positions. In this section I show how the key

participants draw upon small stories, casting themselves within those stories, to position some of their actions and aspirations as being at odds with normative assumptions of behaviour in their professional sphere.

Many (auto)biographical accounts of crafts practitioners' lives, and some oral history work aligns to the general construct of a 'big story' (Bamberg 2004, 2007, Freeman 2007). A linear structure is brought to bear upon past events, focussing on pivotal moments and characters. The commonalities and generalities that recur through these stories, often told around upbringing and education, influential teachers, awards and grants, financial struggles, 'breakthrough' commissions and gallery shows, float an idea of a 'general purpose' master narrative of how a similar life might well be lived (Mishler 1999, Jeffri 1992, Halper & Douglas 2009). Master narratives of career paths and working lives constitute part of the broader discursive construction of contemporary craft. This is part of the structuring discourses of academies, institutions, and canonical literature. Bamberg points out the double-bind that: "master narratives surely constrain and delineate the agency of subjects...however it should not be forgotten that these master narratives also give guidance and direction" (2004: 360). The key participants live and work – do 'being a craftsperson' – within certain parameters or frames of professional norms and competencies. And as Bamberg points out, master narratives can put in place limits and boundaries, but they also set out guidelines and cultural norms. They cannot be considered monolithic or immovable when, as we see here, they offer something for people to resist and act against. The limits that master narratives imply offer potential for change and being different. From this reading we can see Giddens's (1984) concept of structuration in action as norms are simultaneously drawn upon and modified (chapter 3). Small story research ruptures routinised expectations of narrative, examining unrehearsed non-canonical narrative tellings (Georgakopoulou 2007). Locating small stories within everyday interaction therefore offers an alternative perspective on how interlocutors talk about themselves. By telling counter narratives, participants cast themselves as 'other' to the normative character or characterisations established, indexed, or alluded to by telling the story.

### *5.1.1 Positioning the key participants through the telling of two counternarratives.*

The first of these two stories shows John seeking to portray the group of makers as acting contrary to conventional expectations. It is about the group being different.

#### *Extract 5.1*

- 51) *John*: and we don't mind if people don't like it I mean/  
 52) *Liz*: /yeah  
 53) *John*: y'know I think we've taken quite a risk putting something out  
 54) that is completely unedited - we brought along the crap as well -  
 55) we've not left anything out - there is stuff here we know doesn't work  
 56) - we know there's stuff here that's completely -  
 57) I don't think there's anything that completely fails  
 58) but there's some stuff here that doesn't work

As John talks he is surrounded, as are the other makers and the visitors, by the works in the show set out on trestle tables. John is explaining that the artists had decided to bring all the work they had made in their time together. Their decision to do this had been predicated on showing the all the results of their time spent making work together. On the one hand, John saying this can be read as an act of straight reporting: it is 'factually true' that all the material results of the project have been included. But what can be said about why and how John is saying this now? I suggest that John is actively presenting the group as being different, positioning themselves outside of orthodox behaviour. He is both bringing into focus, and also destabilising the norm of showing finished works in a gallery. To summarise this strip of data, John says that they (the makers) have "brought along the crap as well". This line (54), along with the first few words of the next line, can be seen as a small story that provides the evidence for the claim that they have "taken quite a risk" (53). The rest of the extract (55-58) is an elaboration or expanded reformulation of his claim in line 54.

To set John's claim in some sort of context, those at the talk are in Goffman's terms 'ratified participants' (1981:131), in some way or another professional relatives of the makers. As such, I make the assumption that they carry with them a tacit understanding of what the conventions of the physical make-up or apparatus of a gallery show might be: white-painted plinths, glass cases, title labels and price lists. The work shown would be finished pieces, perhaps some

supporting preliminary work or studies would be shown alongside, and the visitors might assume the role of the gallery staff in jointly selecting and editing works for the show. To exhibit the work in this format might be regarded as realising a tacit behavioural master-narrative. In planning the show, there had been a desire to play with these expectations, using rough wooden boards and planks on utilitarian folding trestles and removing the gallery's display cases to behind the scenes. The ratified participants would be aware that this show, although by no means unique in appearance, is somewhat different to the norm. In addition within a more local, directly referable context, the talking had earlier covered the topic of how safe and reserved the craft world can sometimes seem.

So it is clear that John wants to position himself and the other makers as being slightly different, as operating unconventionally, and he shows this in two ways. Firstly, his claim is centred on the mild swearing or extreme case formulation (Pomerantz 1986) of referring to some of the work as "crap" (54). He says they have "taken quite a risk" (53) by not editing out, what would be the normal curatorial procedure, the 'stuff here that doesn't work' (58). And secondly, he portrays them as different through the disclaimer that they "don't mind if people don't like it" (51). It would be normal for someone exhibiting work to aspire to it having a positive reception and evaluation from those who saw it.

John's claim "we don't mind if people don't like it" (51) is corroborated by the reflective "y'know I think we've taken quite a risk" as part of the small story of lines 53-54. The claim (51) becomes the preface and cotext to the small story. Here John speaks on behalf of the exhibiting artists by using "we", marking them off from the potential criticism or poor reception of others, categorised as "people". So, again this preface line is separating the group from other people, marking them as different by declaring immunity from wider acceptance. John's deployment of "we" is reinforced or ratified by Liz's alignment (Sacks 1972) with her agreement "yeah" (52) helping to establish the idea of group affiliation. The preface sets up the risk-taking positioning.

To return to the small story of lines 53-55, it is set as a shared past event narrative, he is speaking on behalf of the group through the plural pronoun "we". The key point is John is using a small story to counter the master narrative assumptions that the ratified participants would be tacitly aware of. He is saying we, this group of us, are doing something just a little bit different.



In the extract just discussed, Liz aligns herself to John's counter-narrative positioning through uttering 'yeah'. Others too, can be seen to resist norms. In the second story Haley's narrative simultaneously resists and implies normative values and behaviours, thus substantiating the position of being different.

*Extract 5.2*

- 462) *Haley*: I remember when we were in Munich last year - er I  
 463) won't say who it is but a gallery owner came in to the space/  
 464) *John*: /↑oh go on say  
                     who it is↑  
 465) *Haley*: gallery owner came into the space and um -  
 466) was very very kind of derogatory about it not being in a white cube.

The relevant section of this extract are the final two lines. The first few lines (462-464) show us that Haley is again referring back to the shared time working in Munich. The exhibitors had been showing their work in the gloomy, dusty working environment of a small foundry. The shared experience of working in Munich has become embedded in the key participants' recent histories and has figured in descriptions of the project at all of the data events, typically reported as part of the explications of the overall project and its context in the opening sections of each data event. But here it is being drawn upon as resource, the reporting of 'facts', what Haley says happened becomes something that 'does something' for the teller beyond transmitting information.

The account looks like unelaborated flat-reporting, but she uses telling about the past event to say something else by using it as an example. In this instance, she is making the case by citing 'another's'; the gallery owner's displeasure at an unconventional approach to displaying work. As in the previous example, the visitors to the data event, as ratified participants, 'professional relatives' such as peers, students, educators, and commentators, would be well aware of the professional norms of exhibiting works in 'conventional' gallery spaces. The extract as a whole constitutes a small, shared, past event narrative with line 462 prefacing and opening the story. 'We' (462) indexes the key participants against a character whom Haley categorises as a 'gallery owner' in the next line. After John's line, Haley's two key lines present her interlocutors with the gallery owner's negative evaluation of them showing work in something other than a conventional gallery.

The first thing to note is that there is a lack of reported speech on behalf of the gallery owner i.e. any possibly interpretable speech is not given. The hearers only receive Haley's evaluation of his reaction. As ratified participants, professional relatives, I argue that all attending would be cognisant of the reference to a 'white cube'. To an extent it is art-world indexical term but one with fairly broad and universal reach across the arts. Its meaning can be glossed as a metaphor for the typical modern art gallery – white walls, spare design, with little other than the artwork to attend to for a visitor. For all present at these data events the idea of the 'white cube' would exist as an archetype based on received knowledge and direct experience. The concept of the white cube, especially as the site for the occasion of a major or career-defining show, is frequently implicated in the big stories of artists' lives. And here we can see how "master narratives...permeate the petit narratives of our everyday talk" (Bamberg 2004:361) building a dense network of category-bound inferences and predicates. Within her small story, Haley has invoked a master narrative to resist how she characterises the gallery owner's apparent opposition to what they have done. She references a master-narrative-as-mental-model but talks about it in terms of something she and her colleagues have worked outside of or contra to. By choosing to site their work in the dirt, grime, and cold of the foundry, they have worked in a materially adverse situation. But by telling of the gallery owner's negative response, they have positioned themselves as working in an unorthodox way, something perhaps more culturally valuable for them to be seen in, a socially adverse situation.

Haley's small story continues the topicality of John's small story and corroborates the deviant positions. The earlier story tells of how the exhibitors had disrupted some of the norms of a gallery show. Haley tells of someone warranted with professional authority over gallery shows, a gallery owner, who is reported as reacting negatively to the group's earlier exhibiting strategy. This adds a layer of professionally-qualified negative assessment to Haley's account. Comparing the narratives under the terms of Bamberg's (1997) levels of analysis, differences in subject positions are attributed. In John's narrative the exhibiting group in his storyworld, represented by "we", are agentive. The group are operating autonomously and with apparent disregard of others' assessments of their decisions. These attributes are accountable to level two positioning as well, how he presents to the audience. The audience also includes his co-workers and he presents himself and them as assertive and able to make their own critical

decisions. In Haley's excerpt, the group, again represented by "we", are characters in the narrative, but here their decisions have been castigated by an apparently adversarial "gallery owner". By refusing John's request to name him, Haley maintains professional propriety to her audience, an audience made up of fellow crafts professionals. Some of the audience might well be able to deduce who the gallery owner was/is, or be gallery owners, themselves.

I will return to this extract in the next section when discussing narratives as exempla but I continue here with a small story that contributes to the idea that the group are trying to present themselves as somehow different, that what they have been up to in some way confounds expectations.

### *5.1.2 Actions and objects in a small story about being different.*

#### *Extract 5.3*

502) *John:* for me one of the most significant things that happened earlier in this  
 503) project when we were in Munich - we just stuck one of Dan's pots on one of  
 504) my pieces as a kind of lead boot ↑so↑ it's a thing where we were just kind of  
 505) putting work on work and in work.

The characters in the storyworld, at level one positioning, are engaged in slightly deviant behaviour. John emphasises the special relevance to him of working outside the bounds of accepted practice by prefacing this small story with "for me one of the most significant things that happened earlier in this project" (502).

John is describing moving work around in the show, an unorthodox activity, but he describes it in a casual way using "just" twice (503, 504) to diminish the effect. He is normalising the behaviour by qualifying the actions that led to significance with "just". This is reinforced by the everyday language used to categorise the work as in "Dan's pots" and "kind of lead boot". These lexical choices are much more colloquial, perhaps even to the point of diminishing the work, than using words such as 'vessel' – a commonly used term when presenting craftwork (2.4). (These domestic terms are possibly congruent with some of the domestic activities listed by John in chapter four. They are congruent with the way Liz uses domestic categories and activities in her 'plug stories', chapter 6.)

The group's conduct was unusual. Without exception, the other satellite shows of the Munich fair had shown work in orthodox ways, works selected, edited, and fixed for the duration of the show. John is valourising the group's actions in the small story of lines 503-5. In some senses he is describing how a work is made, manipulating and juxtaposing components, and thus aligning to canonical expectations of what a craftsperson might talk about. But anyone expecting a technical description would be disappointed. He is describing the conditions by which making happens, telling a story of something coming about.

But my key point here is in the same way that Haley (in the previous example) indexed orthodox expectations by talking about the group's deviant behaviour. John, (too) infers what would have been expected, careful placement of objects, possibly referring to craft objects with slightly elevated language. And again, I suggest that those present would be aware of those expected ways of doing things. But on the other hand, in this context, of peers and those who understand the master-narratives and codes of orthodox behaviour, perhaps John feels licenced to talk in less formal registers about professional matters and is exhibiting category entitlement. Many of the participants have shown affiliation to or coalesced around being a maker as an identity or position; this might just present John with the context to talk colloquially.

As characters in a small counter-narrative, the group are presented as discrepant. This is transferable to a level two positioning as John is part of the group; he is telling a story of himself. But, in designing its telling, he presents himself as one of a group. By using "we", he is presenting himself to the audience as a socially-embedded actor. His audience is populated with his co-workers, so he is possibly signalling affiliation and his ongoing commitment to the group.

So far I have shown examples of how the key participants have themselves told stories to position themselves somewhere outside the mainstream. In the following extract, one of the visitors does some of this positioning work for them.

### 5.1.3 Taking up more individuated positions of being different.

In this chapter I have shown how members of the exhibiting group have used small counter-narratives to position themselves as different to normative expectations of craftworld practices. The narratives have tended to imply group and social action, and in turn positioning as a group of makers. In this section I show how one key participant seeks to differentiate himself from the group positions.

#### *Extract 5.4*

306) *Ben*: ↑Dan↑, he'll be back in a bit -

307) ↑you know↑, he became an accomplished silversmith and then he decided  
308) to cut it off almost to produce the work he produces now.

In Dan's absence, Ben offers a precis of Dan's professional history and current approach. This marks Dan off as somewhat dissident by dint of his deliberate move to distance himself from the traditional skills he had been taught and used in his early career, the master narrative of hard-won skills. This is interesting, as Ben is valourising Dan's wilful amputation of traditional skills in this small story version of a biography. I suggest that Ben tells this story to in some way position *himself* as different. Ben was a craftsperson with a studio practice, this was about fifteen years ago, and has since worked in arts administration. So, in a similar way to Jane, he is both enculturated in and alienated from the exhibitors' world. This is a world, if we look back to chapter four, where much discursive work is done locally to be positioned within or aligned to the membership category of 'maker'. Ben's discourse marker "you know" helps to position him, displaying his knowledge to the others of at least one of the exhibiting makers. He thus positions himself amongst those around him and casts himself as different to a regular administrator. Ben's story sets two people up as being different, both the narrator-self, and the narrated subject.

In this small story we can apply Bamberg's (1997) model of positioning, on two levels, at least. The only character in the story is Dan, and he has been cast as wilfully setting aside his traditionally-learned skills. We might interpret this as both agentive, as "he (Dan) decided", and somewhat deviant as what he "cut off" is described as "accomplished" implying qualities that were hard-won.

But the single character allows Ben to display his knowledge, so at level two, the narrator (Ben) positions himself as aware of Dan's professional history and aware of at least one of the exhibitor's contexts.

Dan has been shown by Ben to be unorthodox and a bit different. But we could suggest that as he was absent from the narrating world when Ben told his story he was in no position to take issue. However, there are a number of instances in the data when Dan presents himself as being different. Taken as a set they show Dan working toward individuating himself from others.

This first example shows Dan indexing the key participants' shared experiences of working together. He contests the consensus that talking has been a vital part of how the group have progressed their ideas. Various participants had articulated at various points in the data their views on the relevance of talk; for example Ben had earlier said: "Well I think that's what's wrong with the sector, there's not enough dialogue like this goes on amongst makers themselves".

#### *Extract 5.5*

438) *Dan*: I still go back to that that time that we had last year  
 439) in February in Munich and that erm -  
 440) and I'm not sure if it did come out of conversation because I think it came  
 441) out of ↑doing↑ and I get quite tired of conversation  
 442) ↑cos I really like doing↑ so it's just like

He positions himself as being different to the others by firstly doubting their agreement in line 440. But he intensifies this view in the next line by supplying a negative evaluation of conversation, he gets "quite tired" of it. This negative evaluation is itself lent more heft by his immediate positive evaluation "cos I really like doing". This establishes "doing" and "conversation" as being in opposition to each other, as much work has been done across most of the participants to align to being a maker (Chapter 4). I make an inference that any positive play made of conversation would be as a complement or co-existence to their making (doing). Dan appears to be talking about them as much less connected entities. Dan reiterates his position in a data event later in the series when he says:

#### *Extract 5.6*

- 1) *Dan*: sometimes there is too much conversation
- 2) Doing is really important, in the workshop
- 3) - Lovely moments when it was quiet.

Here again he makes point and then reinforces it, this time with the positive evaluation of quietness. His reinforcement strategy in each example can be seen as lending greater rhetorical force, a performance feature. On the one hand we might view Dan's excerpts as doing the work of maintaining conventional assumptions about craftspeople i.e. that they work in near silence and isolation. On the other hand, at other points Dan says things that seem contrarian and an equal case can be made that these substantiate a self-presentation of being different. These add weight to the case that he is seeking to individuate himself. During an episode when the key participants are discussing when they structured some time into their normal work patterns to attend to the project, Dan makes the single-line comment "I done it the other way". While the others are suggesting practices that are contiguous with their own, such as weaving, ceramics, and other practices considered to be crafts, Dan contributes "cooking". A case can be made that cooking is very similar to some crafts and there are terms such as craftsman (sic) baker. Ingredients are transformed through various processes with some level of skill. But given the context, "cooking" might possibly be seen as mischievous. But it should also be noted that Dan spends more of his time teaching than the other exhibitors. He might be merely signalling a desire for some focussed making time. Although a more pragmatic reason, it is a no less valid one to signal his preference of making and quietness.

So, while the group have between them presented a case that they are different to others, to gallery owners for example, Dan has added an extra layer of his own as he seeks to differentiate himself from the group: we are different and I am more different.

This section has shown how small stories as counter-narratives can position speakers, and in one example by proxy, as operating outside professional norms. In telling counter-narratives, master-narrative orthodoxies are invoked simultaneously. Because these master narratives emerge tacitly, by this I mean they have not been explicitly told, they are indexed to knowledge of broad professional contexts and norms. As discussed in the introduction, the value of individuating through presentation might be seen in the context of a professional field that, similarly to the creative arts in general, seeks individuality and originality. In the next section I move from counter-narratives to narratives deployed to claim or maintain a notion of difference in a more tangible or explicit way, as exempla.

## 5.2 Underpinning positions: small stories used as exempla.

The previous section showed how “master narratives...permeate the petit narratives of our everyday talk” (Bamberg 2004:361) in tacit local inferences and understandings. In this section, narratives are used as exempla to substantiate and ratify claims and arguments in talk. As in the preceding section I continue to show how participants categorise themselves as different, and this is a core aspect of their ongoing positioning work.

The apparent desire to present how different the individual (or sometimes the group) is can be read against the broader context of contemporary craft. An underlying requirement for craft practices and objects, to be critiqued and validated as vital or contemporary, is often their novelty or individuality. Thus, an idea of difference is an integral part of how the participants’ work and practice are judged by those that might assess them.

In section 5.2 I work with three extracts. The first, co-produced by Haley and Jane, the second told by Jane, and the third, smaller extract co-produced by Haley and John. All three extracts use small stories to make more plausible claims being made as the stories’ cotexts. Two are a shared past experience, the other an individual past experience. The participants are seen to position themselves using categories, and in the first two analyses Haley and Jane continue to work on being different.

The key participants frequently deploy narratives as exempla to illustrate or underpin various claims or positions. This can be seen as actively positing a point of view: as noted by McKinlay & Dunnett (1998: 39) following Edwards & Potter (1992) “One of the conversational functions of narrative is that the plausibility of a claim can be increased by locating it within a narrative structure”. (McKinlay & Dunnett 1998: 39 in Antaki & Widdicombe) As exempla, these narratives are inextricably linked to their cotext, with their occasioning caused by prior utterances. Their prefacing and launching reference prior talk, they are “enmeshed in local business, as opposed to being free-standing and detached/detachable” (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: 4). The use of narrative as a resource deployed as an exemplum can be seen in these cases to be emergent and interactional but also reflective. They therefore go some way in responding to Freeman’s (2007) remarks on small stories and reflective distance. The matter of reflective distance and its relationship to big and small stories is discussed more fully in the next section of this chapter (5.3).



### 5.2.1 Ratifying an argument with a small story in interaction.

In this extract Haley aligns herself to the category ‘maker’ (chapter 4) and refers to some of the work as ‘messy stuff’. This, I suggest, is indexed to John’s extreme case formulation of ‘crap’ that was seen in the previous section – an extract from the same data event. In summary, Haley and Jane jointly work up an opinion or position, using repetition as a rhetorical strategy (Tannen 1989: 175, Johnstone 1994: 14). A story of a shared past event is called up to substantiate the claim. This is the same small story presented as a counter narrative in the previous section. Here, I want to focus on the small story’s interactional context and its potency in validating an argument.

This excerpt follows directly an episode where Haley tells the short story of a visit that she had made the previous day to an exhibition of the work of sculptor, Eva Hesse. Hesse typically employed low-value utilitarian materials in an organic and playful manner that contrasted with the dominant (normatively male) school of austere minimalist art of the 1960s. There is thus a certain visual similarity to that show and the present one. Hesse’s work, and how it is had been displayed at the exhibition, is then discussed amongst the group, leading to the following extract. As an aside, it could be suggested that Haley is referencing Hesse, a figure in the Fine Art world, to distance herself from ‘the crafts’ as part of the strategies discussed in chapter four.

#### *Extract 5.7 (includes 5.2)*

- 457) *Haley*: but I think as a maker it’s still difficult for people to accept some of  
 458) this messy stuff or that they think something’s been badly made somehow  
 459) *Ben*: mmm  
 460) *Jane*: they ↑don’t understand↑ they’re not used to understanding or to  
 461) know or think there’s something to know/  
 462) *Haley*: /↑or they don’t want to know↑ - I  
                   remember when we were in Munich last year er I won’t say  
 463) who it is but a gallery owner came in to the space/  
 464) *John*: /↑oh go on say who it is↑  
 465) *Haley*: gallery owner came into the space and um -  
 466) was very very kind of derogatory about it not being in a white cube

I begin by suggesting that this strip of data can be seen as consisting of two chunks, divided and linked by Haley’s story-opening “I remember” at line 462. Taking “I remember” as a pivotal utterance allows us to see how Haley ratifies a rather general claim, made by herself and Jane in the first chunk 457-461, by

shifting mode from argumentation to narrative: telling a small story, (shared, non-canonical, Georgakopoulou 2007) about someone more specific, the gallery owner, in the second chunk 463-466.

The general claim worked up by Haley and Jane in lines 457-461 is that other people, people who aren't makers, have trouble encountering messy stuff in a gallery situation, unlike makers who understand.

Haley invokes the identity category maker in line 457, clearly aligning herself to the core identity category shown to be established in the data: "I think as a maker". However, if we consider a redacted version of line 457, thus: "but I think it's still difficult for people to accept some of this messy stuff", (i.e. editing out the identity category device maker), the key claim of Haley's utterance, that unpolished messy artworks can be challenging to some, remains intact. However, the additional utterance of 'maker' and self-identifying allows Haley to distance herself from people to sustain the 'maker' category that threads through the data. Makers, on this reading, have a particular insight into the type of work that people find troubling. Inserting maker does considerable work for Haley as a positioning strategy in a landscape of "people". "People" can then be read as a category device alongside, and contrastive to, "maker", as a type of 'other'. I argue that central to Haley and Jane's positioning work is the claim that makers are different from other people. We can see that in the first chunk 457-461, the claim is worked-up interactionally and between themselves Jane and Haley formulate a critical position. Haley parallels "people" with "they" in line 458, and in doing this she specifies 'people', as a category, as other-than, as something different to her and how she has positioned herself. As a deictic, "they" is indexed to Haley's local usage. Johnstone argues that deictics, as presentational devices "force(s) things into the affective field of the hearer and keep(ing) them there" (1994: 18) thus emphasising her point. The claim draws at least some of its rhetorical strength from how it is said and how it is performed. I will return to this argument in chapter six.

Following the claim made by Haley and Jane, Haley shifts to narrative mode with a small story to ratify the claim. The story opening is "I remember" (462). The opening, as a personal recollection, quickly shifts to a plural past experience. Using "we" involves the other key participants who were all at the Munich event and are now at the narrating world. Haley involves her co-workers by using this strategy, and by calling upon others' recollection of a shared event, gravity might

be lent to her ratification ploy in the sense of ‘you know what I mean, we were all there’. In this way “the telling of stories as backing for claims allows speakers to remove opinions from the present context of interaction and recontextualise them by connecting them to the experience of specific characters” (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: 98). The key figure in Haley’s small story narrative is a “gallery owner”, a specific character who remains unnamed by Haley in her narrative, despite John’s invitation to do so at line 464. To name the gallery owner might in fact dilute Haley’s aim, in personalising her critique she would damage any ongoing work she is doing to establish all gallery owners as a category as being different from makers. By zooming in on a specific and jointly recollectable moment, the veracity of her point is amplified as she moves from hypothesis to evidence. The specificity of the event-as-evidence is difficult to question by her colleagues yet she retains sufficient vagueness to cast all gallery owners as a proposed category device alongside makers.

John’s request to name the gallery owner is treated as an interruption by Haley who uses it to repeat word for word her prior line and retake the floor. But repeating the whole clause, and then following with “um” and a repetition of “very”, can be seen as a stalling device to keep the floor before positing her evaluation of how the gallery owner acted in the storyworld. The stall might otherwise be displaying awareness that her assertion could be challenged by some of the other interlocutors as she has previously evoked shared memories in her use of “we”. This is an indication that this is possibly a personal evaluation because of the absence of the gallery owner’s reported speech. There is a window of opportunity here for Haley to report, paraphrase or summarise the gallery owner’s words at that time. Any reported speech could be potentially challenged, Haley has taken a safe option (assuming of course that she can remember his words) and evaluated them as being “kind of derogatory”.

What is evident in this analysis is that by drawing on a shared past event and using it as evidence to back up a critical position, the makers are being simultaneously coalesced and positioned by Haley in relation to others: Firstly as being different and having a particular way of understanding “messy stuff” when compared to other people. And secondly, to ratify this, as doing something discrepant – different to a crafts professional’s assumed obligations.

What is interesting here, and there is probably no way of knowing, is if including two categories (as other to maker) was an intentional strategy of Haley's. She has invoked a quite general, unspecific "people", and she has also invoked a much more specific "gallery owner", obviously a particular individual but left, for one reason or another, as a 'type' of person. Haley has called up 'anybody' and a quite specific 'somebody', an entire continuum of potential people, and in the process cast a specific gallery owner as 'anybody'. This is done in the here and now of interaction. In some ways, the talk is mirroring the greater context of the show, one in which the artists have sought to present how working together in an improvisatory manner has resulted in meaningful coalescence. Working together has generated a set of shared resources, one of these has been 'brought forward' in story form and acquired new meaning in a different medium; talk.

### *5.2.2 Positioning as a maker by contrasting with other practices.*

The example just looked at showed how reflecting on past events and narrating them can be used to underpin an argument. Haley's story also undertook the work discussed in section 5.1, evoking and challenging master narratives of orthodox behaviour. In the next excerpt Jane can be seen to do a very similar thing in that she reflects on a past experience and cites that to build an argument and challenge (her) assumptions of how writers work in order to present herself as being different.

The excerpt formed part of the analysis in chapter four as participants positioned themselves as makers. Here I develop that argument, drawing out Jane's use of a small story to exemplify her argument and thus underpin her position. Through doing this, she makes a case that she approaches writing differently to (her) assumptions.

Jane had questioned the apparent linear chronology of the events as they were presented on the large chalkboard, leading her to say:

#### *Extract 5.8 (also discussed as 4.6)*

78) *Jane*: whereas I think a lot of creative people think sort of more rhyzomically  
 79) (sic) so it's from the ↑centre kind of outwards↑  
 80) and I know in writing that I've been doing recently kind of essays  
 81) I've been writing them from the middle outwards struggling with erm how that  
 82) contradicts the sort of seeming order of how you write an essay and I was  
 83) thinking that in terms of practice because it helped me with my writing

- 84) when I decided that um that I was ↑making essays↑  
 85) once I'd decided I was ↑making essays↑/  
 86) *Liz*: /Yep  
 87) *Jane*: understandable to me  
 88) *Liz*: mmm  
 89) *Jane*: as a process

As in the previous example, this extract shows a claim being made, glossed as how creative people think, being backed up with the telling of a small story, in this case of Jane's individual experience. She is questioning the linear representation by citing her own experience of recent creative practices: writing. Jane calls up the category of "creative people" (line 78), which is not set against any other category other than perhaps a tacit notion of 'uncreative people'. Maybe this is an indexed tacit reference to the 'others' established by Jane and Haley when discussing the people who don't understand 'messy stuff'. Nevertheless, she is claiming that creative people think more 'rhizomically' (sic. I am working with an assumption that Jane means rhizomatically). What is deployed is an allusion to thought and thinking as an organic, generative, elliptical process or structure and possibly alluding to Deleuze and Guattari's writings.

Jane's small story does two distinct things for her. Firstly, it backs up her claim, and secondly it allows her to position herself as a maker or creative person. She is claiming that 'creative people are different, and I am one of those people'. Drawing these two things together, (and this is accomplished during the telling), telling the story as a maker, a creative person, her story is given more credence.

The claim that thinking can be rhizomatic is immediately reformulated and separated by the marker "so" (79). "It's from the centre outwards and I know" (79) can be seen as a story opening, the story then evolves as a "struggle" (81), a presentation of the evaluation of her apparent expectations of writing, until the realisation of coming to terms with the task by "thinking in terms of practice". (Practice is an indexical gloss, it is used frequently to mean artist's or maker's professional and creative actions and occupations.) That Jane found a different way to write to the "seeming order" (82) is presented as the story unfolds as news. The word 'practice's' position in the narration is representative of its position in the storyworld, it operates in the telling as a marker or hinge. Until its utterance, Jane repeats the word "writing" several times; on each of lines 80, 81 and 83 (underlined). But thinking in terms of practice, being maker-like sees

“making” repeated in the next lines: She was writing until she thought of it as making; and is thus a maker. Jane, through a few lines of interaction with Liz, (86-89) does further positioning work by maintaining that writing-as-making had become understandable “as a process” (chapter 4).

The extract can also be seen in terms of the previous discussion of master narratives. Jane, as we know, has not practiced as a maker (in a way the exhibitors would recognise) for a number of years. Her recent history of creating has been producing original works of writing for an MA. The availability of this resource (and I have no idea if Jane is conscious of this as she speaks) taps into or exemplifies one of the master narratives present in the lives of crafts practitioners – the frequently articulated anxieties about having to write (see chapter 2).

We can compare this story to a story analysed earlier. In chapter four Haley spent a great deal of time positioning her representation of ‘process’ as ‘thinking’, mental labour. She relocated canonical assumptions of craft processes from manual to mental. In Jane’s story she is doing something similar; she is relocating assumed, master narrative models of how to write to a domain of making; a different type of labour. Jane positions herself closer to the ‘makers’ by “thinking in terms of practice” and “making essays”, so we can see more nuanced identity positions emerge in interaction than ascribing Jane with simply the identity of ‘university lecturer’. Jane is agentially disrupting those (etic) identity assumptions.

### *5.2.3 Multiple affordances of exemplification in a jointly-told small story.*

This extract comes from a moment in the event when the participants, exhibitors and visitors had been talking about how past decisions, actions, or thoughts can become forgotten, only to somehow be remembered at a later time. Most of the participants were looking toward a group of photographs on the wall. These were snapshots taken during the project by the key participants and they had been oriented to by Rachel, who had made the observation that some of them had alerted her to how certain chains of events might have transpired. Rachel’s observation afforded Haley the opportunity to point out some occurrences and moments that had indeed been forgotten, only to be remembered when looking through the photos.

### *Extract 5.9*

500) *Haley*: the interesting bit about process - so there a couple  
 501) of Munich photos in there - and there's the classic one that one at the top  
 502) *John*: cos for me one of the most significant things that happened earlier in  
 503) this project when we were in Munich

I suggest that these four lines, co-told between Haley and John, exhibit multiple layers of exemplification. Firstly, to unpack something of the excerpt: John's "significant thing" (502), as he goes on to relate, is an index to the improvisatory and playful way in which they had placed and juxtaposed various pieces of work at the foundry show. Haley draws on an observation from Rachel that, for her as a visitor, she had realised things about the project by looking at the photographs on the wall that showed the progress of the project. From this, Haley said that the exhibitors too had realised the relevance of 'forgotten' episodes. She is relating this to the discussion they had had on the nature of process. The excerpt works as an exemplum three times: firstly, Haley is using the photos to exemplify the "interesting bit about process"; that it can be intangible and non-linear. Secondly, the photos have been a useful aid to reflection and thinking about the project. And thirdly, John's prefacing of his upcoming story, marked with "significant", intensifies and corroborates Haley's use of "classic one", a gloss for a good example of something.

### **5.3 Reflection and speculation in small stories.**

In this section I show how small stories can enable moments or episodes of reflection leading to realisation as part of the interactional encounter. The intention is to reveal something of how new formulations and future possibilities can emerge from social situations. This is done as a departure from a crafts literature which typically valorises creativity as the act of an individual, and a crafts literature that has not attended to what talk does in social situations.

Writings on the crafts have often emphasised the creativity or creative acts of the individual, but elsewhere in the literature craft skills and knowledge are often held to be socially distributed. I am not suggesting that these two perspectives are incompatible but recognise in their tension a possible point of departure. The analysis of three excerpts shows how the shared and the social attributes of talk

can engender or mobilise speculation and reflection, contributing to the constitution and presentation of a creative individual.

I remarked in the discussion of the crafts literature how there had been a recent upsurge in taking part in socially-enacted craft, phenomena such as knitting groups and projects gathered under a banner of 'collaboration'. Alongside their happening and enactment, they have also been written about, discussed, and critiqued. My observation was that there had been little, if any, attention paid to a fundamental aspect of these events: what was spoken about while they were being done. The communication inherent in the social enactment had sort of slipped under the radar. The gallery conversations offer a professionally-situated social setting and although the key participants are not going about their regular craftwork, they consider the talks to be part of the development of the project. When taken alongside the claims (noted in chapter four) that the artists view talk as important to their work, I make the inference that at the least these talks are part of their artistic practices.

This section draws on the discussion amongst narrative researchers on the function and place of reflection in big and small story research positions (Bamberg 2004, 2007, Georgakopoulou 2007a, b, Freeman 2007 and see chapter three).

As a summary, narrative reflection can be seen as a defining difference between big and small story research perspectives. Whilst small stories are embedded within the flow of local business, in 'the now' of interaction, the temporal and/or spatial distancing probable in telling a big story offers the opportunity for the teller to review things from afar, but arguably, detached from the local situation.

### *5.3.1 Reflection and speculation in a small story.*

In the following extract, I suggest that as part of the interactional telling of a shared past event, the affordance to suggest a future, hypothetical opportunity emerges. An argument can be put forward that the reflective distance inhered in looking back, remembering and telling, permits critical and creative speculation.

John had been describing that the four makers had met on number of occasions to work together at the adjoining studios of two of the group. Aside from light-hearted commentary of how cold the studios had been (it had been winter), one



of the visitors had seen that in one of the photos on the wall some of the makers had wrapped themselves up in furniture blankets. John offered some thoughts on tools and workspaces. He suggested that although particular workshops can be specialised, there also exists a generality across many tools and pieces of equipment. For example, things like hammers, pliers, saws, and vices exist across many disciplines but can also be very specific or attuned to them and therefore quite strange or even useless to others. So, John's words on the specificity or generality of tools in particular places prompts Liz to say the following:

*Extract 5.10 (from transcript B)*

- 18) *Liz*: I noticed that there was this funny thing where it took a while  
 19) to get into John's room - ↑did you notice that?↑ Because in a way  
 20) that I think noticing that language of tools and making-language if you  
 21) go into somebody else's space - well like John's- you go in  
 22) and you don't really engage because you don't really know what things do.  
 23) You can appreciate them for what they are  
 24) and you might have seen someone use that tool or go through that process.  
 25) ↑But generally↑ you are observing, spectating, and you come back again -  
 26) So in a way that's why we gravitated to our space  
 27) *Haley*: But that began to change.  
 28) *Liz*: it did change yeah/  
 29) *Haley*: /It changed and I see that  
 as the next part of this as well.

I will divide this extract into three parts for discussion: Firstly, the first two lines – a preface. Secondly, the core of Liz's utterance across the next six lines (20-26), a sort of speculative exemplum. And thirdly, the last three lines of interaction and hypothesising.

As a preface to the point that she makes over the next six lines, Liz's opening two lines are an isolatable small story. It is set in the past and is initially a personal story that can be glossed as Liz recounting her feelings about going into John's workshop. But after a slight pause, she sets this as a question to the other artists. This pulls her story towards one of shared experience (with the other makers) and it could be framed as an appeal for some kind of group agreement or alignment. Whether the group alignment is taken up is, I think, incidental to the main point of the preface in that it serves as an exemplum based in experience, 'the real world' of her storyworld for her argument to come. So Liz shifts from the past tense of her opening lines to the present tense for almost all of the points

she makes over the next few lines. This is set as a short present tense hypothetical narrative. By shifting tenses, Liz marks off her evidence for the argument, her prior experience with its appeal to sharedness, from the argument/hypothesis itself in the present tense. This shift to the present indicates that Liz is formulating her case in the now of her utterance. Her hypothesis is rooted in experience, we can see that with the use of her preface. But Liz also ties back her argument to the experience with the words “well like John’s” (21), embedded in the present tense telling. Liz makes the case for the peculiar sense of strangeness and familiarity when entering another maker’s workspace and through the utterance there is a fairly dense repetition of the pronoun ‘you’ (underlined in the extract). We are looking at language in practice so it is quite usual for ‘you’ to replace the indefinite pronoun ‘one’. But I think a case can be made, because of the heavy repetition of ‘you’, that Liz is extending or continuing her appeal to group agreement signalled in the question portion of her preface by referring back to that use of ‘you’. This might be seen as a way of building affiliation or bonds within the group of exhibiting craftspeople. It ties together the present telling and the past experience and the spatial journey concludes with the words “and then you come back again”.

Following this, and marked by “so”, Liz returns to the past and offers a rationale or conclusion that “that’s why we gravitated to our space”. This was a space that of course was not hers at all but rather Haley’s, a space in which Liz had recognised affinity and familiarity with as a jeweller and metalworker through its tools and ephemera.

All this sets up Haley’s much smaller contribution that shows speculation in interaction. Haley begins in the story-world commenting that things “began to change”, ‘change’ indicating some kind of shift of dynamic. Liz indicates her agreement, repeating “change” before Haley’s reiteration and her offering that she can “see that as the next part”. Haley is clearly moving to hypothesise on future plans and directions. Haley’s metaphorical use of “see” echoes Liz’s use of the visual and ocular, ‘observing, spectating’. But this has only happened through her interaction with Liz’s reflections on prior events and presentation of a critical position.

Through the extract, the interlocutors have shifted quite neatly through temporal positions: they began in the past of Liz’s exemplum, Liz then moved forward to the present tense and possible present time of her hypothetical narrative. A brief

return to the past anchors her point in the exemplum before Haley pulls that forward to offer (as yet untold) speculations on the future.

So here we can see reflective distance in a small story inhering the necessary space for critical and creative thinking in an interactional encounter. There is spatial and temporal distance from the storyworld with reflection being seen to happen in the narrating world. It is because Liz and Haley are with each other (and of course framed by the data event context) that their ideas emerge and have a platform.

### *5.3.2 A critical position accomplished through reflection.*

In extract 5.10 Liz told a small hypothetical story as part of the interactional business. Also, as part of this business, Haley formulated a vision of possible future action. In this extract Dan reflects upon a shared experience to set out a critical position. I have looked at this extract in the discussion on exempla (5.2). Here I want to focus on the critical position expressed by Dan and its relationship to a small story. The artists have been discussing the value of their conversations in progressing some of their ideas through the project. John had held that he found moments of talk important both for the project itself and how it could be communicated, from this Dan formulates a counter argument, positioning making and doing at the centre of his priorities.

#### *Extract 5.11 (also shown as 5.5)*

438) *Dan*: I still go back to that that time that we had last year  
 439) in February in Munich and that erm  
 440) and I'm not sure if it did come out of conversation because I think it came  
 441) out of ↑doing↑ and I get quite tired of conversation  
 442) ↑cos I really like doing↑ so it's just like.

“That that time that we had last year in February in Munich” (439-9) barely qualifies as a narrative: space and time are juxtaposed and it is literally a tiny fragment. But its situated meaning has more heft than its size might suggest. By now, stories and explanations of the time the artists had spent at the foundry in Munich the previous year had become well-rehearsed. Dan's line indexes a rich seam of shared history and experience. This line enables Dan to mobilise an

argument from a starting position of shared past experience, indexing what has now become embedded as a story.

The small-story-as-index in the first line prefaces the next lines, and these can be seen as a moment of reflection and as positioning through critique. The transition from the story to the argument is marked by a few words that amount to something of a hedge: “and that erm” (439) possibly buys Dan a little time and allows him to keep the floor to formulate his position. Dan’s reflecting is signalled quite literally; from the narrating-world he says “I still go back” in the first line, taking his listeners to the shared time in Munich. He is very much looking back at a past event from ‘now’ and this is informing his position - that of preferring doing to conversation.

There is a reflective distance in time and place between the small story of the story-world and the narrating-world. The small story, as I say above, indexes what are most probably big stories, but as an interactional, situated shared resource it is the small story that occasions reflection and positioning as part of the business and contingencies of the interactional order. This example has shown how a small story can enable a moment of reflection. In the next extract I discuss how a story is jointly told as a product of, and also as the enabler of, ongoing reflection.

### *5.3.3 Jointly constructed small stories of reflection and speculation.*

In this extract I show how fragments of a story built through co-telling are simultaneously enabled and occasioned by reflection. The text of the story is thoroughly enmeshed in the context of a period of talk-in-interaction. As part of the exhibition (the physical context of the data event) a hundred or more photographs taken during the project and preceding events had been pinned to the wall as a group but in no particular order. Rachel had turned to the photos and suggested that they lent insights into various aspects of the project, as an extra layer of information alongside the artists’ explanations. This leads to Haley, John, and Liz describing aspects of the project with direct reference to some of the photos. Looking back through the photos had brought into focus how prior events, juxtapositions, and visual information had informed future actions without anyone realising such at the time. This extract is a few lines into that episode.

The extract is worked through in stages, re-presenting the data a few lines at a time as separate extracts. Here, the extract is shown in full:

*Extract 5.12*

- 520) *John*: 'cos when we were in the foundry last year there were lots of cast blocks  
 521) that they were casting work in and one of the pieces that Liz had used as an  
 522) impromptu plinth if you like with all her sugar bags on one of the big blocks  
 523) of plaster - and Dan had shown his work on big plaster blocks/  
 524) *Haley*: /big plaster blocks  
 525) *John*: Plaster blocks ↑I can't see anything going blind↑ here we are - he'd  
 526) been using the plaster blocks in the other room and so there's/  
 527) *Haley*: /but then I've just realised/  
 528) *John*: /I don't think I've told it very well/  
 529) *Haley*: /I've just realised as well when you look over there ↑there near the bottom↑  
 530) on the left is a wall of post it notes and around that time I was in America  
 531) and I bought some fluorescent tape - and it's become very well used this fluorescent  
 532) tape 'cos I seem to stick it everywhere erm - and just looking there I think there  
 533) are some little things like that that have come through that 'cos you can see  
 534) those little things those little pointers that come out somehow.  
 535) *Liz*: yeah/  
 536) *Haley*: /'cos there was no fluorescent tape then in that work  
 537) *Liz*: and it's the same for the bag on the plaster block and it's ended up in a  
 538) block I think in a way we sort of suddenly realise all these things when we  
 539) put the pictures up - I suppose we could see it as a big map that way - what  
 540) happened all that time ago  
 541) *Haley*: that was quite an incredible process getting those photos out  
 542) *Liz*: yeah -  
 543) *Haley*: it really was so I think they've been really important to us as well  
 544) 'cos obviously we can look at them on our own computers or we've got a blog  
 545) we can put them on there but ↑actually seeing↑ all of that as it sort of came  
 546) together  
 547) *Liz*: yeah/  
 548) *Haley*: /was quite intriguing 'cos I can still see things that are happening

John tells a part of the story, his gaze is directed toward the photos and he gestures toward them with his arm:

- 520) *John*: 'cos when we were in the foundry last year there were lots of cast blocks  
 521) that they were casting work in and one of the pieces that Liz had used as an  
 522) impromptu plinth if you like with all her sugar bags on one of the big blocks  
 523) of plaster and Dan had shown his work on big plaster blocks/  
 524) *Haley*: /big plaster blocks

John is making the point that some of the material environment of the foundry could be seen to emerge in some of the work the group had made some time later. In this case the physical environment of the foundry, its large rectilinear casting blocks, the abundance of plaster as a working material, had informed his later work as part of the project. He tells the story in the context of the claim being worked up by Liz, Haley, and himself that this had really only become apparent when they had been looking back through the photos and noted the abundance of plaster. John is reflecting on two past shared events: the time in the foundry, and the time when they all looked at the photographs. Both of these places and times in his story world are quite distinct from the narrating world, he is drawing on the there-and-then from the here and now. John has reflected upon these occurrences and is reporting on them now. It is a straightforward reporting of past events in story form. By some measures it is quite unremarkable, mundane even, perhaps a story *about* reflection, merely reporting how events sometimes unfold. John has reflected and is reporting on the fact to validate the group's position. But what is being reported in a straightforward manner is also a moment of significance and extraordinariness, as the makers collectively reflect and remember.

His point is reformulated by Liz some time later in the extract as she orients to John's topical theme after Haley had taken the floor:

- 537) *Liz*: and it's the same for the bag on the plaster block and it's ended up in a  
 538) block I think in a way we sort of suddenly realise all these things when we  
 539) put the pictures up

As a story *about* reflection, John's story-world and narrating-world are distinct entities, from the here and now he is drawing on the there-and-then. But over the next few lines of the extract as his turn overlaps with Haley's, the here and now of the narrating world and the there-and-then of the story world are drawn closer together as the two interlocutors jointly occasion a moment of reflection and realisation:

- 523) of plaster and Dan had shown his work on big plaster blocks/  
 524) *Haley*: /big plaster blocks  
 525) *John*: Plaster blocks ↑I can't see anything going blind↑ here we are - he'd  
 526) been using the plaster blocks in the other room and so there's/  
 527) *Haley*: /but then I've just realised/  
 528) *John*: /I don't think I've told it very well/  
 529) *Haley*: /I've just realised as well when you look over there ↑there near the bottom↑  
 530) on the left is a wall of post it notes and around that time I was in America  
 531) and I bought some fluorescent tape and its become very well used this fluorescent  
 532) tape 'cos I seem to stick it everywhere erm and just looking there I think there  
 533) are some little things like that that have come through that 'cos you can see  
 534) those little things those little pointers that come out somehow.

John concludes his turn at line 523 and his previous quite general gesturing at the photos becomes more directed as he searches for the appropriate photo to back up his claim about plaster blocks: "I can't see anything going blind here". I have underlined the point in line 526 where his narration references the storyworld as somewhere 'closer' to the narrating-world. His talk in the here and now seems to enter the realm of the photograph and hence the storyworld. "The other room" refers to the other room at the foundry, the place depicted in the photos. Whether the visitors to the talk are aware of the room layout of the foundry site is contestable but I would suggest that the other makers would be aware of the term's inference. This sets up the situation that only the key participants have available to them the indexical resonance of this spatial reference. Are the makers necessarily just talking amongst or to themselves at this point though? There is a difference here to the two examples above: John's proximity to the story world has shifted, from a distanced resource he is now to an extent 'within it'.

As John searches for the photo, Haley repeats John's words: plaster blocks but she does not immediately take the floor, John re-repeats the term to continue his turn before appearing to concede the floor in line 528 with a negative evaluation of his own storytelling. Haley's turn marked by "but" and reinforced through the repetition of "I've just realised" (527) brings up a story of here and now realisation and reflection. Her declaration of "just" realising is a product of the emerging interaction with John. As he looks for the photo and cedes the floor, Haley

realises something important to her in one of the other photos: the upcoming story of post-it notes and fluorescent tape. What I think is quite interesting here is the moment of realisation occurs or is occasioned within a moment that John keeps the floor, but he is not able to progress his argument as clearly as he would like. Lines 525-8 see him somewhat losing direction or at the very least unable to (at that moment) combine his argument-as-story with the necessary resources in the photos. His disfluency allows Haley's utterance, announcing her realisation (527). Perhaps this momentary lapse in John's conversational direction presents sufficient time for Haley to find this new connection in the material resource representing the storyworld?

Haley's words in lines 529-34 are a small story of both realisation and of reflection. She declares her realisation "I've just realised as well", draws attention to a particular photo and then tells of her realisation through a story in lines 530-1, which is both retrospective and prospective.

529) *Haley*: /I've just realised as well when you  
                   look over there ↑there near the bottom↑  
 530) on the left is a wall of post it notes and around that time I was in America  
 531) and I bought some fluorescent tape and it's become very well used this  
                   fluorescent  
 532) tape 'cos I seem to stick it everywhere erm and just looking there I think  
                   there  
 533) are some little things like that that have come through that 'cos you can see  
 534) those little things those little pointers that come out somehow.

Haley's realisation appears to be the connection between post-it notes and rolls of fluorescent tape. The connection is most probably the vivid colours of both products and she is remarking on the preceding or near simultaneous appearance of her by now common use of brightly coloured tape that she has identified, and the post-it notes. Haley is indicating a particular photo "near the bottom on the left" (529-30) as a bridge between the narrating-world and the storyworld. But her story is set in a spatially distant "America" (530) yet temporally adjacent "around that time" storyworld. She is recalling one story-world through the material resource (photo) and relevance of another. The words "just looking there" in line 532 set up the fact that the reflection and realisation gained from the photos has been a visual or ocular experience for Her. She might well have noticed the same phenomena if alone in the gallery looking at the



images. I argue that the moment of reflection has been afforded by the disfluency in the interactional business between Haley and John.

Through principally visual and ocular resources and references (reflected in Haley's final line of the extract 'see'), talk in interaction has enabled new meanings to emerge.

The small story of America becomes an exemplum to Haley's general point (534) "those little pointers that come out somehow", a position that has been worked up online through the stories.

Liz shows agreement with Haley at line 535 as well as returning topically to John's theme. Liz is providing evidence of how small reflective moments had occurred and furthering the point by providing the "map" metaphor. But it is distinct from the core discussion where Haley's realisation is, I argue, a direct product of interactional business.

533) are some little things like that that have come through that 'cos you can see  
534) those little things those little pointers that come out somehow.

535) *Liz*: yeah/

536) *Haley*: /'cos there was no fluorescent tape then in that work

537) *Liz*: and it's the same for the bag on the plaster block and it's ended up in a  
538) block I think in a way we sort of suddenly realise all these things when we  
539) put the pictures up - I suppose we could see it as a big map that way - what  
540) happened all that time ago

541) *Haley*: that was quite an incredible process getting those photos out

542) *Liz*: yeah -

The importance of Haley's line at 541 comes to light when seen in the context of the concluding lines of the extract. When seen in the context of Liz's, it is as an agreement and a fragment of story *about* reflection. Here she moves from retrospection to speculation:

541) *Haley*: that was quite an incredible process getting those photos out

542) *Liz*: yeah -

543) *Haley*: it really was so I think they've been really important to us as well

544) 'cos obviously we can look at them on our own computers or we've got a  
blog

545) we can put them on there but ↑actually seeing↑ all of that as it sort of came  
546) together

547) *Liz*: yeah/

548) *Haley*: /was quite intriguing 'cos I can still see things that are  
happening

Reflecting on past experience, her continuation of Liz's point that ends with the past tense of "was quite intriguing" (548) and then shifts to the present tense of "I can still see things that are happening", suggesting insight into future change.

#### **5.4 Conclusions.**

In this chapter I have shown how the participants exhibit and present themselves as being different. I show how they do this through three strategies. In the first section I do this by showing how they use counter narratives, sometimes tacitly indexed, to resist orthodoxies and present individuality. In the second section some participants also use narratives as exempla to ratify claims about how things are different for them as makers. This to some extent 'thickens' the work shown in the previous chapter as various interlocutors coalesced around the membership category of maker. That discussion centred mostly on explicit lexical choice. This analysis shows how tacit indexical assumptions in the talk's context help to substantiate those positions. The theme of being different or individual is extended in the final section to look at how creative ideas are sometimes formed and presented. I show how the participants do this using narratives as a reflective tool.

Crafts practitioners work in a field that like most aspects of the creative arts values originality and individuality. In chapter four I suggested that the data featured little or no technical talk, the skilful procedural processing of materials and tools. This contests certain canonical expectations. Talk of personal or innovative technique could have been one avenue to presenting or exhibiting individuality or originality directly through their work. Instead these participants appear to present their individuality or their difference as characters and protagonists in small story representations of their working lives, not necessarily explicitly declaring an identity but certainly positioning themselves amongst a professional landscape. They perform certain roles to challenge the tacit master narratives of their world. But this also means that they are complying with other canonical expectations and guiding structures. As discussed, being novel, innovative, or individual is very much a requisite quality in many aspects of the arts. Contemporary crafts, as a field, is partly constituted by its interrogation, reworking, or rejection of traditional foundations. And as practitioners in that field,

the participants are presenting themselves in micro as different to established norms. All of the key participants were educated in university art departments or in former art schools, they all have some later experience of working in those places. As such they have been, or are part of the historical shifts in crafts education (Chapter two). One such aspect of 'academisation' is the notion of the reflective practitioner, often grounded in the work of Donald Schön (1984). Being reflective to develop work and practices is taught as part of higher education arts courses. These events show them performing this aspect of their professional identities as a social accomplishment. An argument can be made that the situational event is mobilising and making possible the activity of reflection. As much as they are distancing themselves from certain tropes, they are aligning with certain other behaviours. The overriding evaluation of which, bound up in craft's master narratives, is assumed by them to be *good*.

From this I make the inference that the participants are presenting aspects of their selves to others in a professional context. In this chapter I have noted occasions where the participants talk in ways that can be described as performance features; examples of this are: Haley and Jane's uses of repetition (excerpt 5.7), Jane's repetition of the words writing and talking in excerpt 5.8, Dan's reinforcement of a phrase (5.5 & 5.6), and Liz's use of pronouns to involve her listeners (5.10). In the next chapter I discuss more fully the idea of these data events being performances and I analyse the data in terms of its performance features.

## **Chapter 6. Presenting professional selves in context: performance and ethnopoetic affordance in spoken narrative.**

### **6.0 Introduction**

In the previous chapter I showed how small stories embedded in the local business of talk-in-interaction enabled participants to reflect and work up critical positions. This work was accomplished through counter-narratives and narratives-as-exempla. A key aspect of how the participants positioned themselves this way was to declare or present some sort of difference between themselves, either as individuals, or as ‘makers’ and ‘other’ people. The previous chapter therefore introduced, but did not fully discuss, the notion of self-presentation. The analysis considered the linguistic means by which participants position themselves (and others) but did not explore the performative affordances of their language.

My point of departure is that spoken language-in-practice is a fundamentally different entity to the structuring textual presence of language in crafts discourse. This is a view that seeks “to explain the meaning of language in human life...and not in the abstract, not in the superficial phrases that one may encounter in essays and textbooks, but in the concrete, in actual human lives” (Hymes 1972: 41 in Snell, Shaw, Copland 2015: 24). The analytical engagement with performance approaches amplifies the differences between languaging-work in speaking situations, and textual representations. Looking at language in lived professional practice necessarily involves asking the question:

*In what ways is the situatedness of talk co-constitutive of staging the professional self? (1.1.3)*

In this chapter I discuss six extracts from the data. I show how between them they share features and strategies formative of performance. Talk as performance is shown to be contextually embedded. In particular, assessing the re-telling of a story at two events can reveal its implication in, and occasioning by its linguistic and social context, as can (considering) the role of the audience in a narrative’s telling. Many of these concepts co-exist with the notion of audience involvement. I show in one particular narrative how Liz deploys dramatic devices in the storyworld, drawing together story and narrating domains.

There is an argument to be made that the visitors to the talk had not come in search of a performance, but rather the expectation of hearing information, content, something we might gloss as the facts of the project. On the other hand, I maintain that part of, indeed, implicit in what the key participants were doing is presenting their professional selves. In his essay, *The Lecture*, Goffman notes the division between the linguistic and paralinguistic features of a lecture “draw on a precarious ideal” (1981: 166). Lectures need to be entertaining and involving for the listeners yet they are also strongly content-dependent. “The subject matter is meant to have its own enduring claims upon the listeners apart from the felicities or infelicities of the presentation... So your lecturer is meant to be a performer but not merely a performer” (166). Goffman’s dyad of content and entertainment has some resonance with Bauman’s view on performance as a way of speaking beyond referential content.

The organisation, the expectation of likely content, and that it would come from particular people, suggests framing the events as performances. The assertion can be made that the key participants (at least) are engaged in performing their professional selves in a space-time analogous to a dramatic structure.

### **6.0.1 Outline of the chapter.**

The chapter is in four sections and progresses through six extracts of the participants’ talk. In section 6.1 a short extract from each of Dan and John illustrate how talk and performance are contextually embedded through being designed for various audience subject positions. The extracts are analysed firstly from a lexical perspective, i.e. what is said. This includes strategies such as pronoun shifts. And secondly from a poetic perspective, how they are said, this includes rhythmic pattering through repetition and parallelisms. In 6.2 I continue to show how context is constitutive of how a story is told, but here I show how a story told by Liz is redesigned and re-told for a different audience. Part of Liz’s story design centres on how she uses categories to position herself and her audiences. Poetically, Liz makes use of tripartite structures in her talk. A discussion of tripartite lists continues in 6.3, where two stories from Haley and Liz are structured in similar ways around Chafe’s (1980) notion of the idea unit. In section 6.4 dramatic effect is created by Liz by dissolving the apparent border between the narrating and story worlds. In sections 6.1, 6.2, and 6.4, narrator

and character positions are made more apparent by tightening the analysis with Bamberg's (1997) model of positioning in narratives.

### **6.1 Embedded in social context: designing talk for multiple listeners.**

In this section I use two stories and show how the way in which they are told is attributable to the context of their telling. The way they are told exemplifies the case made in chapter three that the gallery conversations are a 'low key, high stakes situation'. John and Dan's stories can both be seen as emergent performances of professional face and both are embedded in the immediate social context. This is evident in both stories as John and Dan design their talk to accommodate various subject positions in the audience. I divide the analysis into two parts. The first, looking at both stories, is essentially content-oriented, what is said, particular lexical choices. The second part of the analysis adopts an ethnopoetic perspective to show how the stories were told, focusing on parallelisms, repetitions, and rhythm in the talk.

#### *6.1.1 Two stories contextually-designed through lexical choices: Dan's story.*

I have suggested in chapter five that Dan has worked at presenting himself as being different from the rest of the key participants. In that analysis I argued that Dan sought to distance himself from the emerging group consensus that talking and conversation amongst them was important. Returning to that extract I consider how Dan performed his self to those around him at the data event, with relevance to the notion that these are low-key, high-stakes events. I discuss the performance features and how Dan figures in the story and narrating worlds (Bamberg 1997).

#### *Extract 6.1 (also shown as 5.11 and 5.5)*

438) *Dan*: I still go back to that that time that we had last year  
 439) in February in Munich and that erm  
 440) and I'm not sure if it did come out of conversation because I think it came  
 441) out of ↑doing↑ and I get quite tired of conversation  
 442) ↑cos I really like doing↑ so it's just like  
 443) but then I think there's a lot of conversation through the doing as well.

The utterance's "referential content", to proceed from Bauman's concern, might be glossed as Dan's professed uncertainty that the work came out of talking, and that he prefers 'doing'; this forms the basis of the claim he is 'doing being different'. How then does Dan invoke performance in his words that are "above and beyond its referential content"? (Bauman 1986: 3).

Firstly, Dan involves his interlocutors by launching his argument from the locally-indexed reference to Munich in the first line. All the key participants were at that event and its repeated citation has been a key reference point in discussions of the project. The use of such a gloss to a story more or less as a resource is a reminder that Dan's words are contextually-bound. He can only index with such a gloss in an environment that understands its relevance. His pronoun shift in the opening line, from "I" as narrator to "we" as one of a number who shared an experience, orients to and involves his fellow exhibitors. Although "Munich" as an event and precursor to the currently exhibited project is known about by all present, the specificity of it as a glossed shared experience appears to only address Dan's colleagues. It is to colleagues, the other key participants, that he making his point.

In line 439 Dan hedges and gains time to formulate his counter-view with an "erm" and a small pause. I think an inference can be made that Dan's counter-view would need to be formulated with some care. He has spent a considerable amount of time working together with his co-key participants. They have between them done considerable interactional work at the gallery events toward coalescing as a group and showing cohesion and group membership (shown in chapter 4). Therefore, performing a contrarian view needs to be managed carefully, enough to exhibit his difference but not so much as to damage affiliative bonds. There is work to be done around his responsibility to his professional face. Therefore "not sure" on line 440, whilst a negation that opens his contrary view on talk, might also be seen as a type of disclaimer; it tempers his view should he need to make repairs following any possible contestation from other speakers. Additionally, we can see Dan returning to a qualification at the end of his claim when he offers "but then I think there's a lot of conversation through the doing as well" (443). This is a possible concession that talk might be integrated somehow with the activity of doing.

After the joint involvement of Dan's "we" pronoun, he shifts to the first person 'I' for the rest of the extract. The repetition of 'I', said on every line, puts Dan at the centre of his argument, strongly identifying himself with the individuated view being articulated. This is how Dan presented himself as different in chapter five.

Using Bamberg's (1997) approach to narrative positioning makes visible how the distance between narrating and storyworlds can be used by a speaker. Dan presents himself as individual in both the storyworld (level one) and the narrating world (level two). In the storyworld, although signalling group cohesion with "we", he deviates from the group consensus, and also presenting himself as thoughtful and considered, "I'm not sure if it did" is a measured response. The shift to the present tense in lines 441-2 "I get quite tired...I really like doing" locates him in the present of the narrating world where he uses the opposition of "tired" and "really like" to make his view known.

I suggest that Dan's changing use of pronouns and the presence of disclaimers and hedges make up the content of his utterance, but also form the core of how he performs his utterance. I think he understands he is addressing two (broadly speaking) constituencies, aware that his audience all occupy a range of subject positions. A hypothetical etic list would include journalist, craftsperson, and student. Dan needs to manage his discursively produced self's proximity or distance to each. He appears to want to present his individuality, based on his counter-consensual view on conversation grounded in the use of 'I', to those who might be glossed as the visitor-participants. And yet, he is maintaining ideological proximity to his colleagues with his disclaimers and hedges. His way of expressing himself is thus inextricably bound to the local context.

#### *6.1.2 Two stories contextually-designed through lexical choices: John's story.*

The next excerpt shows one of the key participants in a comparable social context. In a similar way to how Dan negotiates an ideological space between his fellow exhibitors and other visitors at the event, we can see John having to negotiate a similar 'high stakes' situation as he apparently denigrates the qualities of the group's work:



*Extract 6.2 (Also shown as 5.1)*

- 51) *John*: and we don't mind if people don't like it I mean/  
 52) *Liz*: /yeah  
 53) *John*: y'know I think we've taken quite a risk putting something out  
 54) that is completely unedited - we brought along the crap as well -  
 55) we've not left anything out - there is stuff here we know doesn't work  
 56) - we know there's stuff here that's completely -  
 57) I don't think there's anything that completely fails  
 58) but there's some stuff here that doesn't work

I proceed from Bamberg's analytical framework, assessing how characterisations are achieved by the speaker at three conceptual levels. This enables a process of unpacking how John is performing through language while still drawing on the same means, such as pronoun shifts, shown in Dan's story.

At level one, the positioning of people in the storyworld, John presents the exhibiting makers as collegiate, unified and socially organised. He does this through the use of pronouns, his opinion is articulated as his own, so he refers to "I" (51 & 57). However, the decision to "bring along the crap" was made collectively, indicated by the repeated use of "we" that he shifts to during the telling of his narrative. A group decision was made of a high-risk exhibiting strategy.

John's positioning to the audience, level two positioning, is centred on his presentation of the group (the "we") as risk-takers; a group who are doing things outside of normative expectations. This is the basis of my claim that the key participants present themselves as different to other people as part of chapter five. On line 51 John presents the group as critically immune; he deploys a stake inoculation (Potter 1996: 148) to entrench the group position.

Considering level three positioning; how John formulates a version of "Who am I?", expandable to, 'Who are we?', surely draws on the level two projection of risk-taking. But I think hovering above the direct local interaction, drawing together the stake inoculation and John's focus on dissident approaches, is an implicit presentation of the group as highly agentive and self-determining.

This is (I argue) all designed to manage the various distances and proximities between John and the subject positions occupied in the first place, in the storyworld, and in the second, the narrating world of participants. I expand on this in the next paragraph.

The social context is complex. All present at the event are what I described in chapter three as professional relatives and in Goffman's terms ratified participants, but this is to offer a representation that is too cohesive. Each occupies their own subject position. It is perhaps obvious but the aggregated group is made up of individuals. Any homogeneity at the event amongst the interlocutors has been constructed through talk, as I showed with the orientation to the maker category and the formulation of the concept of process (Chapter 4). Social cohesion at the event was not necessarily a quality of the populating selves existing a-priori but has been a local interactional accomplishment. The result is that John has to play to a number of constituencies simultaneously. He has to present his self to any number of people-as-categories, or positions, at once. So, we can claim that the social context shapes what John says or how he says it. This can be seen quite markedly in the closing lines of the extract:

57) I don't think there's anything that completely fails  
 58) but there's some stuff here that doesn't work

After denigrating some of the material in the show as "crap" John hedges his view shortly afterwards in line 57, withdrawing slightly; saying "I don't think there's anything that completely fails". John has just represented the work to the visitors but also sitting around him are the people he made the work with. He has played out something of a dissident position by marking the work as "crap". I would argue that a convention inferred as a category predicate amongst all present would be that it isn't normal to show 'crap' in a professional gallery. As part of a longer ongoing process shown in this chapter, and outlined via Bamberg's level two positioning, he is saying to the visitors 'we're a bit different'.

However, "When talk comes from the podium (the ratified participants) have the right to examine the speaker directly, with an openness that might be offensive in conversation" (Goffman 1981: 137-8. My insertion in parenthesis). John runs the risk of one or more of the visitors asking 'So why have we come to see a load of crap?' Equally, one or more of his co-workers might well ask him; 'Hey, are you saying I make crap work?' John has already implicitly made clear the group decision over what to include in the show through his use of 'we' in the preceding lines, in effect implicating his colleagues in his evaluation. The hedge should therefore be seen as directed to the visitors, a strategy qualifying the group's moves to be different, glossable as: 'OK we are operating outside of expectations but we aren't completely exempt from the norms'.

It also qualifies even their 'crap' work as being worthy of some sort of attention: 'I might be calling it crap, but it's not that bad really'.

John's use of "crap" does more than simply describe the qualities of some of the work. The lexical choice of crap possibly violates social norms at the event. The event is a peculiar genre, an amalgam of conviviality and professionalism, seriousness and informality (chapter 1 & 3). Nonetheless, very little swearing appears in the data as a whole and 'crap', although relatively mild, might register as a contravention of politeness. John's choice should be seen against possible alternatives such as rubbish, poor work, or failures. As a single lexical choice, it might have the dramatic effect of positioning John as a bit unconventional. However, it must be said that this point is analytical conjecture.

This section has shown how two stories can be considered as performances because their design, as a contingent aspect of talk-in-interaction, takes into account the complexities of their social contexts. The design features discussed have been lexical choices, *what* has been said. I now move to consider the same two extracts with an ethnopoetic analysis, *how* they were told.

### 6.1.3 An ethnopoetic analysis of Dan and John's stories.

'Crap' was a single lexical choice. The following observations move to particular patterns in the way the utterance is said. Repetition and parallelisms occur through the extract, particular structures recognised as indicators of the poetic function of language and relevant as performance features. I show in this section how the two stories can be analysed from an ethnopoetic perspective. I repeat Dan's excerpt here with line breaks that illustrate more clearly the performance features:

- 1) *Dan*: I still go back to that that time that we had last year in February in Munich
- 2) and that erm and I'm not sure if it did come out of conversation
- 3) because I think it came out of doing
- 4) and I get quite tired of conversation
- 5) cos I really like doing so it's just like
- 6) but then I think there's a lot of conversation through the doing as well.

In lines 1 and 2 Dan deploys a number of rhetorical strategies that can be understood as performative, ethnopoetic tools, underpinning his positioning in this particular context or situation. I have mentioned above the functional value of Dan's use of 'I' but (through) spoken repetition in each line establishes a

rhetorical pattern. In addition, “conversation” is repeated on lines 2,4,& 6, a pattern paralleled in the alternating repetition of “doing” on lines 3,5, & 6. This sets up an A,B,A,B,A,B pattern between the two activity-types at the core of Dan’s deliberation between the two concepts conversation and doing. The rhythm established through repetition is embedded in a set of lines that have similar syllable counts. Lines 3 and 4 have ten syllables apiece and line 5, eleven. These near-equal lines are bracketed by lines 2 and 6 and both lines are composed of sixteen syllables. Dan’s initial claim that talk was less pivotal in the project, and his eventual, hedged evaluation, are longer, containing, as they do, his argument

Seen this way, Dan’s words show how something is said can enrich the performance of spoken language. As a key participant at a podium event, he is warranted with certain rights to speak and to take the floor. Dan is seated and he spoke these lines without any great changes in intonation, he used no great bodily gestures, circumstances that might suppress expectation or negate a claim that he is performing. And yet, the patterning and structuring of his lexical choices can be seen to underpin what he is saying “above and beyond its referential content” (Bauman 1986: 3). Dan’s deployment of “doing” can be interpreted as a triple repetition, a similar triple repetition of “stuff” is seen in John’s narrative, looked at next.

John’s small story can be seen through a similar lens to Dan’s. His words too, seem to be delivered within an emergent structure of poetic devices. I have re-presented the excerpt with features to be referred to shortly as underlined:

53) *John*: y’know I think we’ve taken quite a risk putting something out  
 54) that is completely unedited we brought along the crap as well  
 55) we’ve not left anything out there is stuff here we know doesn’t work  
 56) we know there’s stuff here that’s completely  
 57) I don’t think there’s anything that completely fails  
 58) but there’s some stuff here that doesn’t work

I have previously suggested that John is talking on behalf of the group with his use of the plural pronoun ‘we’. It is used five times through the utterance, in the small story, and its most immediate cotext of lines 53-55. Reinforcing the concept of group solidarity, such close repetition contributes to rhythmic structure in the talk, the pattern of delivery and the function of the utterance are thus linked.

In all but one of the uses of 'we' it is deployed as anaphora prefacing each clause, each clause that might be classed under Gee's terms as an "idea unit" (1989: 288), thus:

- We've taken quite a risk
- We brought along the crap
- We've not left anything out
- There is stuff here we know doesn't work
- We know there's stuff here that's completely

Dan's story can be seen in terms of idea units too as he puts together his argument in small segments linked by conjunctions:

- 1) *Dan*: I still go back to that that time that we had last year in February in Munich
- 2) and that erm and I'm not sure if it did come out of conversation
- 3) because I think it came out of doing
- 4) and I get quite tired of conversation
- 5) cos I really like doing so it's just like
- 6) but then I think there's a lot of conversation through the doing as well.

John refers back to the work he categorised as 'crap' as "stuff". This moderates any social impropriety in his language stylistically but also contributes to an ongoing negation of the claim discussed above as how John might be hedging his view. The point here though is that he repeats the word on each of lines 55, 56, & 58; this is in combination with the repetition of "completely" on lines 56 & 57 contributing to rhythmic patterning. There is a functional shift similar to the regulating achieved with "stuff"; the first "completely" (54) is used to intensify the lack of editing in the laying out of the show, resulting in 'crap' being shown. His later use qualifies and partly negates his view on whether "anything...completely fails" (57). It is doubtful whether any specific claim could be made based on the number of repetitions deployed here but it is worth noting that both "completely" and "stuff" are used three times, echoing the strategy of a three-part list. A repetition of "doesn't work" in lines 55 & 58 appears each side of the parallelism "completely fails" in line 55.

John shifts tense during the utterance. His initial claim in line 51, formulated as a stake inoculation (Potter 1996: 148), is in the present tense. He is referring to the here and now of the exhibition. The small story element that follows, including its preface, is told in the past tense through the verbs "taken" (53), "brought" (54), and "left" (55). This establishes a storyworld of past action done and experienced

by the “we” signified key participants. Midway through line 54 John returns from the storyworld to the present of the narrating world by using the deictic “here”:

55) we’ve not left anything out there is stuff here we know doesn’t work

This return to the narrating world is a reminder that the overall topicality at the event is of the project and the work in the gallery. Although this is a lexical shift, I would argue that it has performance value in that it orchestrates participant involvement, it draws attention from the space and time of the small story to the here-and-now of the surroundings. The relationship between the text and the context works the other way round, too. John can only direct his listeners back through the deictic ‘here’ because here, constituted by those objects in this particular space, is this particular ‘here’. The talk and the immediate material context are thus co-dependent. (I expand on storyworld-narrating world distance and proximity in section 6.4).

In this section I have shown *how* a narrative is told contributes to its performance. The two small stories are shown to be told through a number of ways that can be considered distinct from their referential content. John and Dan perform their narratives, and thus their professional selves by involving their listeners. This has demonstrated the role of the audience-as-context across stories told by two participants. In the next section the argument is furthered by showing how common resources inform the telling of two versions of a story by one participant in two different audience contexts.

## 6.2 (Re)performing narratives: the contextual-dependency of telling a story twice.

A performance-oriented analysis situates talk in its social and physical contexts. It draws on Hymes’ shift in focus from the text to the event as the basis of studying communication (see Creese 2008: 230) and considers the “performance situation, involving performer, art form, audience, and setting” (Bauman 1975: 290). By this view, the context is constitutive of the talk, locating it firmly in, and of, that context. However, performed talk is part of “the interaction of complex and heterogeneous formal patterns in the social construction of reality” (Bauman & Briggs 1990: 65). For Bauman and Briggs, from a social constructionist (Burr 2003) perspective, performance, as dialogic and intersubjective, can transcend spatial and temporal locations as well as being shaped by context (1990: 60). These elements combine to make stories into portable resources and

performance makes this possible: “Performance puts the act of speaking on display – objectifies it, lifts it to a degree from its interactional setting and open to scrutiny from an audience...performance potentiates decontextualisation” (1990: 73).

In this section I look at two separate occasions where Liz draws on her past experience to mobilise a view, positioning herself as having an affiliation with the material world, the world of things. Each occasion was at a different data event. Neither of them were the event from which the core data transcript was drawn. On both occasions, as Liz spoke, she drew on the same resources, embedded in narrative fragments. I call them Liz’s ‘plug stories’. By looking at the two separate plug stories, we can compare the analysis to the discussion in the opening paragraph. I will look at each story in turn and consider both from the perspectives of positioning and categories, Bamberg’s multiple levels of positioning, and an ethnopoetic orientation to the use of tripartite lists.

#### *6.2.1. The first plug story.*

The first plug story occurred before the second plug story and at separate events. Perhaps coincidentally, they occurred at around the same time as each other, at around one hour twenty minutes. Before this extract, Dan, another of the exhibitors, had been talking about an event when some silversmithing students had visited his workshop. The students had been instructed by their tutor to watch Dan at work. They were not allowed to talk with Dan but were asked to observe what he did and to prepare to discuss their thoughts and observations as a group immediately afterwards. Dan spoke of his surprise at the students’ misunderstandings and apparent lack of knowledge exhibited in the things they said during the discussion. His generally critical comments prompted Liz to say:

#### *Extract 6.3*

- 1) *Liz:* ↑These were students weren’t they?↑
- 2) - I don’t want to go on a rant about this -
- 3) But I have issue with young people - because  
*Rising laughter from all in the room sustained for 3 or 4 seconds.*
- 4) ↑Because they generally↑ - because the majority are students y’see
- 5) And they’re learning they tend to be - and a lot of them are young
- 6) I think this comes back to something somebody was saying
- 7) And I cant remember who it was but
- 8) Er er knowing and learning through objects and our experiences with them
- 9) and I translate that as cos I learnt through making really genuinely

- 10) through wiring a plug or putting a lightbulb in through erm
- 11) picking up something broken and try putting it back together -
- 12) its really inherent in my interpretation of making
- 13) and I feel people that I've had endless conversations
- 14) about this sensory connection with the world
- 15) *Neil*: understanding materials/
- 16) *Liz*: /understanding material/
- 17) *Neil*: /just by making a bow  
and arrow
- 18) *Liz*: - yeah it doesn't even have to be as wonderful as that
- 19) and I got wiring a plug because mum couldn't dad wasn't there
- 20) it was wonderful it was a job get all my tools out and I enjoyed it

The extract is quite long so it is helpful to break it into smaller pieces, delineating some of its elements before looking in more detail. Lines 1-6 show Liz's response to Dan, affording her a preface to the coming lines. She orients to earlier topicality in lines 6-7 before launching into her central point, that certain aspects of her epistemological position were (in)formed by mediating with materials and objects (see also chapter 7). This extends to the end of the extract but contains within it three small stories: lines 9-11, 13-14, and 19-20.

This event was the first of the five gallery conversations. It was the least attended of the series, consisting of about a dozen people including all four of the exhibiting makers. What was important about the group, from the point of view of this discussion, is that none were students. All were of more-or-less comparable age to the exhibiting makers, were somehow professionally engaged with craft, and were known to the exhibitors. I suggest that this warrants the way in which Liz frames her opening few lines: she evokes a category of "students" (1) as a response to Dan's story into which she expands to "young people" on line 3 before re-specifying to "student" on the next line. She is situated amongst professionals and this licences Liz's lexical choice, establishing a category that is 'other' to those around her. The social context of the event has shaped *how* Liz has said something but her lines are also rhetorically performed. She sets her category as a tripartite list, casting them as 'young people', 'students', and then as 'young'.

As part of her preface, Liz formulates a disclaimer: "I don't want to go on a rant about this – but" (2), protecting herself from her upcoming critical stance. When Liz says that she has "issue with young people", she establishes distance between herself and the other participants as a group, and the subject of her



dissatisfaction (young people) through the use of categories. This occasions the most audible feature that might frame her words as a performance, the paralinguistic feature of laughter from the rest of the room. The laughter signals, in a visceral way, appreciation from Liz's interlocutors. The audience's role is powerful in framing this as a performance, more overtly powerful in some ways than the features in Liz's talk, as residing in it is the quiet "wider authority" of the podium speaker (Goffman). We might also ask if the laughter from the group signals affiliation from the group to Liz's 'I' in her story; put another way, do the audience have an issue with young people too?

Liz's formulation of "young people" as 'other' is reinforced on line 5 with her observation that "they're learning", thus casting them as novices or aspirants, setting them further from the social context of established professionals in the room. Her next line is again contextually dependent as she orients to local topicality: "this comes back to something somebody was saying" (6). Liz might be referring to a specific person as indicated by "I can't remember who it was" (7) but whether by indexing a person or a topic, or both, her line is embedded in local concerns.

Liz then makes a move to reposition herself through her story, to occupy the students' or young people's shoes, so-to-speak. Her words "cos I learnt through making" launch her story, but simultaneously reposition her storied self in relation to her telling self. Using Bamberg's levels of positioning, we can see that at level two Liz has identified with and settled herself in the narrating world's social context as a fellow professional, which is in addition to her warranted authority as a podium speaker. The interlocutors' sustained laughter does much to show appreciation for the position she takes. In lines 9-11 Liz repositions herself with the past tense "I learnt". She speaks about her past, when she was young like the students, but tells of how engagement with materials and mundane artefacts formed her epistemological position. By Bamberg's level 1, Liz is re-cast in the storyworld as an aspirant novice. She compares her early exposure to materials to the students in Dan's story who were criticised for their relative poverty of such knowledge. Liz's listeners can be left in no doubt about her removing herself to the past and her younger self when, in lines 19-20, her mum and dad figure as characters in the story. Liz's positioning in the narrating and storyworlds combine, "construct(ing) a local answer to the question "who am I?" (Bamberg 1997: 337). She has positioned her 'then' self to her 'now' self, maintaining distance to the category of young person or student.

We can see then that the audience, the people around her, have determined some aspects of how Liz has told this story. Put another way, Liz tells the story this way because of who she is amongst. The story is embedded in its context and its cotext. And yet we can also see Liz's story transcend spatial and temporal locations, in a process of decontextualisation and recontextualisation, by turning to the second occasion of Liz telling her plug story.

#### 6.2.2. *The second plug story.*

At a subsequent gallery talk Liz, draws on her 'plug story' again. Prior to the extract, Ben had been putting forward the view that if people (I infer he was speaking of a broad category of generalisable people) understood something more of how products and commodities were made, they (people) might take more care over what they bought. His hope was that if making was more widely understood and valued, then what he branded as an 'Ikea' culture of disposable goods might be slightly undermined.

#### *Extract 6.4*

- 1) *Liz:* and maybe making's about it isn't erm it it's a way of life a way of seeing the world
- 2) *Ben:* yeah exactly/
- 3) *Liz:* /what they think what they do and I think that needs to
- 4) be valued and I've spoken about and disseminated in - - lives/
- 5) *Ben:* /being transformed in to other materials not necessarily crafts object or whatever
- 6) *Liz:* and I mean I ↑I teach↑ and we all I think we all teach I think there are
- 7) teachers and lecturers amongst us here and whether this is a generational thing
- 8) showing my age but erm - I've come across a lot of students that their very
- 9) their experience in the world erm it's very low on the sort of tactile side
- 10) *Ben:* ↑exactly↑
- 11) *Liz:* I think I don't I don't know how many changed their own plugs
- 12) or put a bulb in a socket or have to do things like that
- 13) I'm not suggesting they should be a mechanic
- 14) or know how to fix a car but the very simple everyday things in life
- 15) they don't think they have the opportunity -
- 16) they don't allow themselves to do that they or maybe the want is not there -
- 17) maybe if society says y'don't need to know because/
- 18) *Ben:* /well the education system through health and safety
- 19) *Liz:* mmm yeah maybe I er its just finding out about the world through making
- 20) with materials another way of seeing finding out about themselves.

'Plugs and bulbs' have evidently become something of a resource for Liz. I will discuss this shortly but for the moment I want to look at the different way (as compared to the analysis above) that Liz gets to speak about plugs and bulbs. In this way we can see the contextual dependency of her talk. Firstly, the attendance for this talk was much greater than the earlier talk, about thirty people. Many were what I have called elsewhere professional relatives; other craft-artists and makers, art department lecturers, and others whose working lives intersected with or circulated around the crafts. But more importantly, this event was held on Wednesday afternoon, so there were also a number of students present. Unlike the earlier event, Liz did not know who everybody in the room was, in particular any of the group of students. I argue that because of the unknown qualities of some of the audience and students being present, Liz's talk in lines 5-9 is more modulated and measured than in the first version of the plug story. In that event she launched straight into declaring an "issue with young people", a fairly combative statement, but in this version she negotiates her way through her preface with mild hedges and qualifications. In lines 6-7 Liz invokes the category of 'teachers and lecturers', and positions herself in this professional group. She proceeds to seek affiliation in the audience through her assumption that similar people are present "amongst us here":

- 6) *Liz*: and I mean I ↑I teach↑ and we all I think we all teach I think there are  
 7) teachers and lecturers amongst us here.

Liz builds her appeal for affiliation through a tripartite list; starting from "I teach", moving to "we all teach", and finishing with "there are teachers and lecturers amongst us here". Each element getting slightly longer. The first plug story is prefaced by establishing the dissimilar, students; the second plug story by establishing familiarity, teachers. She moderates her earlier "having an issue" by offering that it might be *her* age, not just that the students are young "a generational thing, showing my age" (7-8) a mild negative evaluation of herself. Liz positions herself as being partly at fault, but she minimises her agency by using the inevitable process of aging. Liz articulates her criticism of students more fully in this utterance:

- 8) showing my age but erm - I've come across a lot of students that their very  
     their  
 9) experience in the world - erm it's very low on the sort of tactile side

Liz pauses during her utterance and hedges with a time-using “erm” twice, appearing to be finding a way to formulate her critique appropriately while “young people” are in the room. Using Bamberg’s level one storyworld positioning we can see that, although critical, Liz moderates the students’ agency several times in her storyworld, thus negating their responsibility for their position. Firstly she ascribes the students’ subjectivity to their “experience” (9), which shifts situational agency to the surroundings and environment of the students and away from the students themselves. Liz builds on this idea after drawing on her plug story resource: “they don’t think they have the opportunity” (15). Agency, in this case, is more diffuse. Liz speaks about ‘opportunity’; the opportunity to learn through materials, something that ought to be available, isn’t thought to be available by the students. Liz posits this could be because of their “experience”, what has happened ‘to’ them, thus reiterating their non-agentive subjectivity. Liz continues to work this theme, elaborating on her criticism of the students’ lack of motivation: “they don’t allow themselves to do that they or maybe the want is not there” (16). But she then re-situates greater structural forces as the reason for the lack of agency, “maybe if society says y’don’t need to know” (17), effectively absolving the students of her criticism of them. This is very clever interactional management by Liz as she is able to criticise the students whilst situating any blame with greater forces (society), modulating the forces of agency and structure in her talk.

In addition, on the terms of Bamberg’s level two positioning, she has also positioned herself in the narrating world, amongst her peers and students. The same ascription of agency at level one also positions her at level two as being sympathetic to a contemporary student’s greater social context. Liz keeps her hopes for students’ new knowledge modest: “I’m not suggesting they should be a mechanic or know how to fix a car, but the very simple everyday things in life” (13-14).

In the middle of the extract Liz parallels her own history of engaging with domestic tasks in lines 11-12 with her hope for what students might learn or experience in lines 13-14. Its neatness and its performance value relies on a parallel pair of tripartite lists, which are underlined.

- 11) Liz: I think I don’t I don’t know how many changed their own plugs
- 12) or put a bulb in a socket or have to do things like that
- 13) I’m not suggesting they should be a mechanic
- 14) or know how to fix a car but the very simple everyday things in life

Liz has deployed a similar list a few lines earlier when orienting to other teachers in the room. Here she summarises her own experience, and as was shown in the earlier story, the basis of her epistemological position in the underlined references to ‘plugs, bulbs, and things like that’. This is immediately echoed in ‘mechanic, fixing a car, and everyday things’, again, underlined in the extract. Both of the tripartite lists are also of a similar structure and each features two quite specific tasks: changing a plug, putting a bulb in, and being a mechanic and fixing a car. Each list then rounds off with a general, less distinctive phrase, “things like that” (12), and “simple everyday things” (14). The final phrase in each list serves to summarise her point, but it is worth considering that their non-specificity might be a strategic, deliberate, negation or absence on Liz’s part. By this, I mean Liz might understand the rhetorical or performance value of three-part lists as strategies and has sought to deliver them for performative effect without having sufficient commensurate examples to hand in the ongoing real-time flow of interaction.

Liz has drawn on long-past personal experience to position herself within the storyworld (level one) and also in the local context of the narrating world (level two). Deploying the same resources on two occasions amplifies how Liz positions herself as “be(ing) true and relevant above and beyond the local conversational situation” (Bamberg 1997: 337), positioning at level three. The small story resource is durable and enables Liz to stabilise her self and bring a sense of continuity to her position. Although enmeshed in local business, as a resource Liz’s plug story simultaneously presents something of her self as either distant or apart from the local situation.

To finish this section, I will briefly turn the discussion to small story research and make three points regarding both these narratives. Firstly, the subject matter or the topicality of Liz’s story, bulbs and plugs, and domestic impedimenta settle the analysis in that part of the small story project that seeks to reveal the mundane, the everyday. Narrative size resides not just in literal scale but in the reportability of topic. Indeed, in this regard we can see Liz in her second plug story negating and distancing herself from the more celebratory potential of the hypothetical situation of a student becoming a motor mechanic. By many measures the skill and knowledge involved in being a mechanic is of a relatively high order and holds professional status. But Liz is celebrating the overlooked and the domestic and how that has (in)formed her.

Secondly, the analytical benefit of showing a small story performed differently on different occasions, i.e. in, or as constitutive of, different contexts, also equally shows that a small story as a resource can be loosened from local interactional business. On the one hand, Liz's plugs and bulbs can only be told in the way they have been told because of when, where, and why they were told. But on the other hand, as a transportable resource to be brought and deployed, they surely also command separability from local business?

Thirdly, this particular example demonstrates the connectivity between big and small stories (see, for example Freeman 2007, Bamberg, 2004). Liz's fragment is arguably constitutive of a master narrative that I shall gloss here as the 'meccano childhood', i.e. the way in which having a 'practical' childhood forms a later life of being some type of maker or craftsperson.

### *6.3 Idea units, repetition, and tripartite lists: An ethnopoetic analysis of Haley's education in metal and Liz's workshop.*

In concluding the last section, I alluded to how many of the participants have signalled their affiliation to the material world of objects and physical resources, and how this might contribute to an emerging master narrative glossed as the 'meccano childhood'. That discussion is elaborated in chapter seven. Here I continue its theme, materiality and objects, as I look at two narratives, one told by Haley, and one told by Liz. I also continue with two of the analytical tools from the previous section: tripartite lists and repetition, and also consider the notion of idea units (Chafe 1980, Gee 1989).

In this extract, Haley is telling the other participants how her epistemological standpoint is grounded in a knowledge of metal. Haley's claims appear to co-form a master narrative of 'material identity' that emerges through various episodes amongst the group of participants. This is discussed more fully in chapter seven. In this section I focus on *how* she says what she says, and suggest her lines represent a more expansive use of ethnopoetic features than, say, Dan's extract discussed in 6.1. Similar strategies will be shown exhibited by Liz in the second extract in this section.

*Extract 6.5*

- 1) *Haley*: I mean I trained in metal
- 2) and that's where my knowledge of working with stuff comes from -
- 3) but I don't just work in metal
- 4) but I think I approach material erm like handling metal
- 5) and what I notice in the world is I do that too
- 6) so I will experience say y'know issues that are going on in life through that as well
- 7) so the trading of metal and what that means -
- 8) um I have a sister who's a ↑metal expert<sup>↑</sup>
- 9) so we've talked about that a lot its always been very important
- 10) so I understand the world and economics and all those things through metal
- 11) through that thing.

Haley's words fit to a model of spoken language as described by Chafe (1980), Gee (1989) and Goffman (1981: 172). Through the extract, on Hymes' terms a stanza, Haley's talk is produced as relatively small 'idea units'. In the transcript each of these idea units approximately correspond to each line and as a clause. Each proceeds from a conjunction or a discourse marker in the manner of "but I don't just work in metal" (3). It is clear here that Haley's "speech is produced in little spurts, each of which contains a new piece of information" (Gee 1989: 288). The conjunction serves to link each small (conceivably) independent concept as they are uttered. Each conjunction or marker voices "the online production of speech, the mind actively at work" (Gee 1989: 288). They show the processual, ongoing contingency of formulating positions and argument in talk-in-interaction.

Similarly to Dan (6.1), Haley employs repetition. The topic of the extract is Haley's knowledge as based in metal and her particular relationship with metal. It is not surprising, then, that "I" and "metal" are repeated. But I suggest, as in Dan's talk, this patterning lends to the performance value of the talk. Metal is repeated six times and in five of these instances appears as the last or second to last word in each idea unit or line-clause. So, although metal is of topical relevance, it provides a repeated lexical 'anchor' to the end of each clause. An epiphora to be seen alongside John's anaphora in 6.1.3. Line three shows this clearly:

- 3) but I don't just work in metal

It is also apparent that in the same lines 'I' is placed in a very similar way, the story is 'of' the first-person, it is about Haley and 'I' is used ten times. However, in six of those instances 'I' is used as the first word and once as the second word in each idea unit or clause, coming immediately after each conjunction. So, 'I' is necessary and constitutive of the first-person topicality but its placement, along with the placing of 'metal', also provides a solid repetitive rhythmic structure in talk, again, comparable to John's anaphora in 6.1.3.

Haley offers an evaluation of her position at line ten:

- 10) so I understand the world and economics and all those things through metal  
 11) through that thing.

In doing so, she brings this small performance to a close with the rhetorical strength of a tripartite list as a summary: 1) 'world', 2) 'economics', 3) 'all those things'. Haley then emphasises her point with a reformulation, a parallelism of the last two words of line ten on line eleven: "through metal" is repeated as "through that thing".

Before moving to Liz's narrative, I want to briefly show two examples where Haley uses the same performance devices, the tripartite list, and a degree of phonetic repetition. Both of these excerpts formed part of the analysis in chapter four, interlocutors positioning as makers, and working-up varying meanings of the concept of 'process'. Firstly, Haley appeals to a broader understanding of creative practice:

#### *Extract 6.6*

- 252) *John*: ↑Get away from crafts↑.  
 253) *Haley*: no it's not to get away from it but it's to share something else about it  
 254) you know the ↑musical thing↑  
 255) all of that the ↑material thing↑  
 256) all of those things that are just so strong.

There is a repetition across lines 254-6, lines 254 and 255 lines are of similar length and repeat a phonetic, rhythmic pattern of "musical thing...material thing". This repetition is in turn connected to the next line with phonetic repetition in the line starts of "all of th-". 'Thing' is then repeated further in line 256 to form a tripartite list.



Secondly, Haley uses the same three-part strategy but lists only one concept, “thinking process”. While not really a list, the poetic feature possibly affords a similar rhetorical function by amplifying a point and lodging it in the perceptual field of the listener. “Process” is then repeated twice more in following lines. The strategy is effected in a three-part use of the word “outcome(s)” throughout the utterance.

*Extract 6.7 (also shown as extract 4.17)*

288) *Haley*: so you know it is a ↑thinking process↑ rather than - I think that's what it 289) is for me it's about a thinking process not an outcome/

290) *Liz*:

/yeah yeah

291) *Haley*: but all of our work is seen in outcomes

292) so you ninety percent of what I do during the year is about the thinking

293) process - and the process - probably more than that actually and

294) ↑five percent↑ is about the individual object being out there

295) um and I don't y'know even going down to how you make a living or what

296) you do I make my living from the process not from the outcome.

Liz used tripartite lists in her ‘plug stories’. Interestingly, Haley’s and Liz’s lists follow a similar structure that might plausibly be viewed as a deficiency, but I suggest any negative evaluation might be qualified, as I see in it a possible social or interactional function. Both start with specific references for the first two parts of their lists, but then complete the tripartite pattern with something vague, less determined. Haley moves from the specificity of the “world” and “economics” to the generality of “all those things”, and in her second list moves from “musical thing” to “material thing” to “all those things”. I have previously shown Liz’s list firstly, “plugs” and “bulbs” to “things like that”, and secondly “mechanic”, “fixing a car”, and “everyday things”, it shows a pattern of moving from specific to general in terms of lexical choice. I suggest that both Haley and Liz exhibit an innate knowledge or understanding of three part lists as a performance strategy but on the one hand, composing talk in the real time of interaction does not afford sufficient opportunity to complete each list with a third definite example. And on the other hand, in the social environment such vagueness involves opening up a potential space for other participants to interpret on the terms of their own experiences. It can afford to an interlocutor, through involvement, the possibility to position their ‘self’ in the ongoing processual structuring of argument.

Some of the same performance features similar to those used by Haley in the previous extract, such as repetitions, parallelism, and idea units, can be shown in this extract of talk from Liz:

*Extract 6.8 (from data transcript B)*

- 10) Liz: In your own space there's a sense of comfort there
- 11) ↑there's everything the same↑
- 12) I don't know if your workspace is the same
- 13) but I can leave mine for one day or a year and nothing will change
- 14) that ↑hammer↑ is still there
- 15) those ↑pliers↑ are still there
- 16) ↑and↑ I can trust that and that has a place in a maker's journey

Firstly, in the opening two lines Liz makes use of repetition, with a three-part deployment of “there”. These two lines constitute the substance of Liz’s claim, that she finds a sense of personal stability in her workspace. This is a claim centred on her own experience. In the next line Liz initiates involvement, drawing her listeners to her concerns by reformulating her claim as a question, effectively asking if they feel or experience the same as her. The possessive pronoun “your” (12) and the singular “workspace” (12) appear to maintain the theme of individual experience in the way she asks the question.

The next three lines function as an exemplum to her point (chapter 5). The performance device of a parallelism is evident on lines 14 and 15 as Liz reformulates imagery of her tools. It is a conceptual reformulation, presenting a very similar idea twice, but this is reinforced performatively by the very close phonetic duplication, notably around the double repetition of the “th” phenome.

- 14) that...there
- 15) those...there

Relevant to the idea of performing these lines, the overall structure of the extract can be segmented into idea units, perhaps not as sharply as in Haley’s lines, but nonetheless I suggest they are indicative of “the online planning and production of speech” (Gee 1989: 288). I show the extract again here but segmented into idea units:

- 1) In your own space
- 2) There's a sense of comfort there
- 3) There's everything the same
- 4) I don't know if your workshop is the same?
- 5) But I can leave mine for one day or for a year
- 6) And nothing will change
- 7) That hammer is still there
- 8) Those pliers are still there
- 9) And I can trust that
- 10) And that has a place in a makers' journey

Each line-unit is prefaced by either a conjunction or a deictic pronoun. Firstly, Liz locates her narrative spatially through naming her “space” in line 1. Each line then builds from the previous one starting from a conjunction or a pronoun that keeps her utterances located in her space or specific to her experience, which is pronounced in 2 and 3 with the repeated use of “there”. Her point of view is thus assembled from short clauses pieced together in the real time of spoken interaction. Looked at this way, passages such as Haley’s in the previous section, and Liz’s here, clearly show that points of view, stories, and argument (to give a few examples) are built up in an improvisatory manner with each utterance informing and structuring the next. This is an obvious difference to how points of view, stories, and arguments are assembled in the time-flow of writing to be presented later in the textual world that dominates linguistic representations of craft.

The way Liz structures her emergent idea units, presenting them a piece at a time, exhibits rhythmic patterning that aligns to an ethnopoetic view of spoken language. As noted above Liz starts her stanza (Hymes) with a three-part repetition of “there”. “There” does not reappear in the rest of the extract but there is a multiple phonetic repetition of the initial “th-“ phoneme through the second half of the extract: “that” (7), “those” (8), “that” (9 & 10). This next observation is a little tenuous but I think worth noting. The “th-“ phoneme almost alternates with “I” at the start of each idea unit throughout the excerpt. (I explain here:) The conjunctions “but” and “and” used as line starts on lines 5, 6, 9, & 10 function as linking words between the referential point of Liz’s narrative. The other line starts tend toward a deictic function, anchoring the storyworld to the spatial location of the workspace or indexing particular tools. The “but” and “ands” can be deleted without losing sense of Liz’s utterance, thus.

- 1) In your own space
- 2) There's a sense of comfort there
- 3) There's everything the same
- 4) I don't know if your workshop is the same?
- 5) I can leave mine for one day or for a year
- 6) Nothing will change
- 7) That hammer is still there
- 8) Those pliers are still there
- 9) I can trust that
- 10) That has a place in a makers' journey

Throughout the extract each clause is started from an "I" or a "th", establishing a pattern

I, th, th, I, I, N, th, th, I, th.

This applies to all the lines other than the evaluative phrase "nothing will change" close to the middle of the extract on line 6.

In this section I have shown that two stories, setting out how their narrators are linked to the material and physical world, are both performed in ways that align to an ethnopoetic perspective. Both stories can be shown to be built as a result of the ongoing organisation of talk i.e. idea units both structure the talk and emerge in the talk. Both narrators make use of repetition; phonetic and lexical, as effective rhythmic presentation devices, and some of the talk is further structured within tripartite lists.

#### **6.4 Positioning the self in the storyworld as a dramatic device.**

I have shown in 6.2 how Liz has narrativised her younger self. Variations in a subsequent narrative can be shown to be contextually dependent, especially when an analysis is made of how Liz positions herself amongst different audiences, such as students and other lecturers. In this section the presenting of self in a narrative can be seen to additionally involve a powerful dramatic strategy. By the way Liz tells her story, the boundary between the storyworld and narrating world lacks distinction, contributing, I suggest, to audience involvement. The topic of the narrative is designed to produce a dramatic effect in itself as Liz tells of being questioned by another jeweller. Using Bamberg's positioning model,

we can see how Liz seeks to present her professional self, in, and out of the narrative.

The extract features fewer ethnopoetic devices than other extracts in this chapter. Nonetheless, in addition to their performance value, they also appear to structure functional aspects of the story.

The extract comes as the key participants had been talking with the other visitors about some of the implications of showing ‘work in progress’ at a gallery and how they might present the way the project had evolved as they had worked on it. The project had started with the circulation of sets of unfinished works between each of the four makers for them each to continue working on. One of the visitors had recalled other shows where they had seen sketchbooks shown alongside finished pieces and “understood what was happening” on a previous visit to the gallery when they “keyed into” the four sets of objects. Haley acknowledged the risk-taking in presenting the works in such an informal manner but claimed that the mutual support of her co-workers had made the risk much easier to take.

The following is offered as a provisional gloss of the narrative’s sequences. Haley concludes her view on working together (127-28). Liz shows agreement and refers to a previous telling of her view on this (129-30). She elaborates on this through various narrative frames through to line 140 where she offers an evaluation before telling a speculative exemplum narrative and then turning to another evaluation in the final line.

#### *Extract 6.9*

127) *Haley*: we wouldn’t necessarily have done that alone it seems like  
 128) a thing to do we need to do together it that sense  
 129) *Liz*: it does and I think I said it on the Wednesday talk that I  
 130) ‘cos I think another jeweller  
 131) asked the question erm [↑don’t you do that anyway↑ this process  
 132) push your own work and ideas as a maker you know almost  
 133) ↑aren’t you supposed to do that as your job?↑] and my response  
 134) was [well yeah I don’t think I’d trust myself to do it as perhaps  
 135) honestly or accurately because if ones needs (unclear word)  
 136) and having a conversation with y’self I can choose to listen to  
 137) whatever I want or edit and and y’know make er - er lead you all on  
 138) or lead myself on so [I still have that control but I think if I and  
 139) I because I’ve done it with others three other makers everything’s there I  
 140) haven’t had to edit I’ve had to respond to things

141) I could've ignored if I was by myself]  
 142) and and in a way when you do it solo you do imagine what might be  
 143) for that exhibition - let's say you do your work and you choose your work  
 144) then there's there's y'know I would have felt that I have to fill something  
 145) a gallery with new work potentially some for sale or what am I saying  
 146) but to do it this way is genuinely unknown

In this extract Liz uses a clever dramatic device as part of her performance to the audience as she places her storied self in some minor professional jeopardy. She does this in lines 131-3 in the form of a question from “another jeweller” embedded in a small story:

131) asked the question erm [↑don't you do that anyway↑ this process  
 132) push your own work and ideas as a maker you know almost  
 133) ↑aren't you supposed to do that as your job?↑] and my response

This affords her the resources to perform her professional self to those around her. Liz has shown agreement with Haley in line 129 and launches her story with the meta-narrative cue of “and I think I said it on the Wednesday talk”. She reports her own voice from the Wednesday talk that she “wouldn't trust myself to do it”, thus placing herself in her narrative. This has been offered as the answer to a question directed at her and still to come in the narration of the story. Liz categorises her inquisitor as someone similar to herself, “another jeweller”, possibly implying equal professional status and thus warranted with sufficient authority to ask. Therefore, the question is to be taken seriously, it has not been asked by a student, for example, a category Liz has been seen to “have issues with”. Liz gives voice to the other jeweller, reporting their speech. They had made it clear they thought Liz should be obliged to push the boundaries of her work (lines 131-3 and marked in square brackets); “aren't you supposed to do that as your job?” (133). By reporting this, Liz has put her storied self in some small jeopardy, she has had her professional moral stance (if that isn't to overstate the matter) interrogated by a peer. But doing this, positioning herself as a listener affords Liz the opportunity to respond in her story. This she has to do to her audience of fellow crafts professionals in the narrating world.

Liz comes out of reported speech for a few words of meta-narration “and my response was” (133) before opening the reported speech of her reply to the jeweller with a diffident “well, yeah” (134). The meta-narration can reinforce the

involvement of the people at the narrating world in the storyworld, enhancing its dramatic effect. Liz's shifts also bring into focus the utility of Bamberg's narrative positioning method. Liz defends herself from the position of her storyworld character, I show her reported speech proceeding from the open square bracket. Her first clause after the marker "well yeah" is the repetition of her negative evaluation of not trusting herself. This reinforces the lack of agency that 'storyworld Liz' has so far experienced. After being subjected to an awkward question, she now self-doubts her own ability to make an informed decision. Over lines 138-141 we can see her character gaining some stability and agency with "I still have that control" (138) and having acted with greater responsibility in "I've had to respond to things I could've ignored" (140-1). She clarifies and reinforces her affiliation to her co-workers by ascribing her "control" to "do(ing) it with others" (138-9) and "respond(ing) to things I could have ignored" by not being by herself (140-1).

Liz positions herself, through being questioned, at risk and lacking surety, her agency has been somewhat diminished in the storyworld (level 1). This is heightened by stating her self-doubt as a negative formulation through a parallelism: in line 130 Liz says "I wouldn't trust myself to do it", shortly followed by "I don't think I'd trust myself to do it" (134). However, this affords her the opportunity to present herself to the audience in the narrating world (level 2) as responsive to questioning, reliant to some degree on her colleagues, and self-aware, a positive self-evaluation.

The way that Liz tells this story is designed to contribute to audience involvement. Liz's performance of herself in her response to the other jeweller's question is enhanced by lodging it in the 'now' experience of the narrating world by collapsing the distance between the narrating and storyworlds. The lines that follow from her response to the other jeweller appear in some respects as a more or less unified utterance, perhaps an aggregation of 'idea units' joined by conjunctions and markers. But through shifts in tenses and footing (Goffman 1981), Liz blurs the boundary between the two worlds.

Her reply to the jeweller, as a meta-narration, is set in the past "and my response was" thus locating her listeners in the storyworld. But Liz's upcoming response, elaboration, and explanation is set in the present tense through to the end of line 138; she appears to be in the here-and-now of the narrating world. Liz returns to

the past tense of the storyworld during lines 139 and 140 to clarify the benefits of working with “three other makers...responding to things I could’ve ignored if I was by myself” (139-40). The extent to which Liz’s utterance is embedded in its situational context is exemplified by the task of attempting to determine just where her reply (in the story) to the other jeweller ends. Her talk between line 135 and the end of the extract can be seen as a sequence of ‘chunks’, larger in scale than the idea units so far analysed in the chapter but nonetheless separable and linked by conjunctions. These can be shown to represent a number of observable points at which the answer to the jeweller ends, and I sketch them in the next paragraph.

The end of her reply could have been on line 135, closing with the word “accurately” before the conjunctive “because” leads to a small narrative in lines 135-8. These lines could conceivably have been addressed to her narrating world listeners or to the other jeweller. Her reply could equally be at the end of the narrative that ends on line 138 before the “so”, taking her account back to the past tense where again Liz might still be replying to the jeweller until the end of line 141. Liz shifts her words back to the present tense for the final lines (142-6), this is a hypothetical narrative told as an example of normal exhibiting practices: “I have to fill something a gallery with new work potentially some for sale” (144-5). She draws her listeners into the job of “imagin(ing)” (142) with a frequent repetition of “you” and “your” – she is directly addressing her listeners.

The point being is that Liz is managing to expand and compress the temporal distance between the story and the narrating contexts partly through shifting tenses. To some extent, her task is aided by the physical context of the narrating and storyworlds being the same, the gallery space. I suggest that the lack of definition regarding the end of the reply to the other jeweller and the shifts in tenses bring the narrating and storyworlds closer together. Additionally, the focus on her listeners through “you” involves her audience in her performance, heightening its dramatic effect.

Compared with some other extracts in this chapter, Liz’s extract features fewer ethnopoetic devices such as repetition, but I suggest that those deployed support an argument for the place where Liz ends her answer to the other jeweller. Indeed, reported speech, as much of the extract is, is argued by Bauman and others to be contributory of an ethnopoetic structure.



I have said above that Liz's reported speech to the jeweller might conclude in a number of places. But I suggest that ethnopoetic and performance features mark a particular chunk of talk. Looking at line 138 shows a discourse marker "so"; over the next three lines there is a dense repetition of "I", eight times, showing a rhythmic patterning that has not existed in previous lines. In addition, Liz shifts back to the past tense. I suggest that these features combine to mean that Liz as the narrator is saying these lines in the narrating world 'looking back' at the storyworld. I therefore suggest her reported speech to the other jeweller as a character in her narrative ends at line 138. In lines 138-41 (in square brackets) Liz is 'out of character' and speaking directly to those around her in the narrating world.

The analysis of just where Liz's story ends, and thus where the story and narrating worlds overlap, is an interpretative process and other conclusions might be shown to be equally plausible. Nonetheless, the point is not defining where precisely the narrated becomes the narrating, but rather that this blurring and lack of definition exists in the first place. Deploying this elasticity in her talk, I argue Liz involves her audience in a story where she positions her storyworld self in a place of professional risk. This, of course, affects how she is viewed by others in the narrating world, a place of professional risk.

## 6.5 Conclusions.

In this chapter I have shown how small stories are performed. This view takes account of *what* is said, but also of *how* it is said. Section 6.1 illustrated this by comparing the lexical and poetic aspects of two narratives told by Dan and John. I have shown how the way a story is told is dependent on its context. This can be seen in the way that Dan and John have designed their narratives to take into account the role of the audience. Two narratives told by Liz in 6.2 show how the same resources inform and shape the story according to the categories of people in her two audiences. Both of these discussions show that the participants are aware of their ongoing social contexts, and are sensitive to how relevant subjectivities inform their obligations and responsibilities as narrators. In 6.3 I showed how Liz involved her audience by drawing together the storyworld and the narrating world, and casting herself as character in jeopardy, as a dramatic device.

The analysis shows that the participants appear to have knowledge of, and the ability to deploy, poetic and performative qualities of spoken language. These qualities extend across a range of devices. Haley and Liz both enhance their presentations of self by using tripartite lists. Liz makes relevant membership categories as tripartite lists as she defines “young people” “students” and “teachers”. She similarly calls up “mechanic”, “fix(ing) a car”, and “simple everyday things”. Haley, as part her education story, makes relevant “the world...economics...all those things.”

Liz’s utterance about her workshop are delivered with phonetic and lexical repetition, rhythmically suggesting the sound of her hammer with line starts of “There’s...There’s...That...Those...That”.

Idea units (Chafe 1980, Gee 1986) make visible the way in which talk is assembled as an interpretative and improvised activity as each “spurt of information” is added to the last with conjunctions. Haley gradually builds up a presentation of herself as one invested in an education centred on metal. Dan makes his case for “doing” as opposed to “conversation”, putting together his argument with idea units.

Liz’s ‘plug stories’ contribute further to the argument that these accomplishments are processual and contextually contingent, thus emphasising that any ‘meaning making’ remains fluid and mutable: “participants continually engage in interpretive activity – and thus reach understandings – as a way of seeking order and normalcy during the course of their everyday conduct” (Schiffrin 1994: 233). But although talk is grounded in its context, Liz’s plug stories also show that speakers’ resources can be recontextualised. Some of the material used to perform the professional self, in the case of these analyses, small stories, is durable and transportable. Liz’s plug stories, through their portability, have enabled her to have done different things at different events, and when next told it will most likely do something slightly different again.

Contextually-relevant narrative design is evident in Dan and John’s stories in 6.1. Both artfully manage their sensitivities to audience subject positions by hedging and qualifying the critical positions that they take up. Although both are being careful to account for other’s feelings and investments, the overall inference must be made that the work is done with more self-concern at the core, as both are skilfully managing their contingent professional identity-positions in this ‘low-key, high-stakes’ environment.

Using Bamberg's model of narrative positioning enables a view on narrators positioning themselves near simultaneously as characters in narratives, and as actors in the narrating world. This is most noticeably accomplished by Liz as she casts herself in a narrative as the recipient of a question from a peer. From this relatively non-agentive narrative position Liz, positions herself, as a narrator, as conscientious and working collegiately: "I've had to respond to things I could've ignored if I was by myself".

Attending to performance and ethnopoetic features loosens language-in-practice from hegemonic evaluations of linguistic competence. As a research perspective it can validate the claim that crafts practitioners use language in knowing and contingent ways to language aspects of their working lives. Interlocutors go about "explain(ing) the meaning of language in human life...and not in the abstract, not in the superficial phrases that one may encounter in essays and textbooks, but in the concrete, in actual human lives" (Hymes 1972: 41 in Snell, Shaw, Copland 2015: 24). "Artistic discourse is viewed as emergent in the events in which it is realised. No longer defined by a canonical written text, it is a kind of practice." (Hanks 1996: 191). The fluidity and processual accrual of contextually relevant but shifting understandings and meaning contrasts with the relative fixity of the (often solo-authored) textual hegemonic narratives.

## Chapter 7. Material and spatial resources in makers' narratives.

### 7.0 Introduction.

In this chapter I show how material and spatial resources figure in the participants' small stories, asking the question:

*How do material resources shape the performance and production of the text?*  
(1.1.4)

The chapter is divided into four parts. I continue to work with positioning and show how interlocutors use material and spatial resources to underpin how they present themselves. I show how material and spatial resources (I sketch a definition of these terms below), are used as an organising and structuring instrument in small stories. This analytical direction represents a development from previous chapters but requires a little unpacking and orientation, attempted over the following paragraphs.

In chapter four I showed how many of the participants, the exhibiting makers and visitors to the event oriented to the category of 'maker'. The analysis showed that once articulated and established in the local talk, maker and making became a category or position that participants oriented to and coalesced around. They did this to position themselves within the immediate local discourse context and within wider professional discourses and contexts spoken about at the event. Positioning was negotiated and accomplished through a more or less explicit deployment of lexical choices as categories. In the coming analyses I draw on the view, summarised by Deppermann, that "Membership categorisation focuses almost exclusively on explicit positioning by referential practices and categorisation...The hallmark of positioning, however, is to recover how positions are invoked by more implicit, indexical practices" (2015: 382-3). In this way categorisation and positioning as distinct approaches are more thoroughly enmeshed.

I attend to a range of resources that are in various ways relevant to the event or its participants as predicates. The analysis is therefore similar in approach to that of chapter five, where symbolic meanings embedded in master narratives enabled positioning. Orienting to the maker category often exhibited an accompanying concern for a range of other concepts, material, time, and process were key amongst these (Chapter 4). I take one of these concepts, material, and

I show that participant references to material resources figure with some level of frequency and salience. The analysis shows that the explicit lexical category positions explored in chapter four are underpinned in the participants' narrative practices by an implicit matrix of references to material resources.

I define material resources as references in the data to manifest artefacts or physical objects, "from the molecule to the building". These words from Rachel, said when describing her university's research centre (Chapter 4), alert us to the issue of scale. In line with Rachel's inclusive definition of materials and objects, I include the built environment as a material resource, and the focus of the argument is the concept of materiality and physicality. One of the things that participants accomplish with material resources is to establish concepts of spaces, space and materiality, and these appear to be interwoven in the data.

My use of the word *reference* in the paragraph above is quite deliberate. The core aim of the thesis is to reveal and discuss the affordances of *language* in the professional lives of these makers. It is not an explicit requirement that the object (as well as its linguistic token) is present at the narrating world. So although the participants are, in these excerpts, concerned with objects, the analysis is concerned with the linguistic representations of them and what they afford.

In the second part of the chapter I turn to critiques of narrative analysis that have sought to bring greater attention and legitimacy to space as an organising principal in narrative (eg Herman 2001, Baynham 2003, Georgakopoulou 2003). Some of the extracts and analysis in the first part of the chapter reveal place and space as topically relevant in the data. Using that as a point of departure, these data address some of the concerns raised in those critiques showing space and place to be more than "a kind of stage-setting for the action" (Baynham 2003:349). From the perspective of this research's subject, craft practices, I delineate a particular way in which some small stories are anchored in the material world, thus linking the participants' spoken ways of meaning-making to crafts practices "where materials are always part of the point" (Koplos 2002: 82).

I have noted that the data does not 'go technical'; the makers do not explicate or enumerate practical or procedural knowledge or information on the technicalities of their crafts. This finding can be read as simultaneously resonating with, yet also contradicting important orthodoxies of the craft literature (chapter 2). On the one hand, the lack of any articulation in the data of 'how to make' appears to align to the orthodoxy of tacit knowledge (Dormer 1997), that is some things such

as craft-making are beyond or other to language. On the other hand, by many authors' reckoning, the technical, descriptive, and instructional are "richly represented" (Adamson 2010) in the literature.

### **7.0.1 Outline of the chapter.**

I proceed in 7.1 to show how narrative that feature references to material resources offer a range of interactional affordances. These include: presenting objects as characters in the narrative; showing how learning is facilitated through objects; how objects enable thinking, and expand what 'making' means. Additionally, they provide the means to work up affiliative bonds. In 7.2 I discuss how space and place are topics of narrative but also how they reveal emotive bonds and psychological aspects in their telling. I show how space can move from being a topic of narrative to the means by which a narrative is designed, in 7.3. And in 7.4 I draw together space and place with time, frequently apparent in the excerpts to argue that many of the stories are stories in motion. In this way, narrative is conceptualised as processual and emergent.

### **7.1 The work of objects.**

In this section I show how some of the participants draw on material resources in their talk. I argue that it sustains the positioning the participants did around the category 'maker' in chapter four. I work with four extracts to show how material resources figure as characters in narratives (7.1.1), enable learning (7.1.2), expand the concept of making (7.1.3), and how material resources enable affiliative bonds (7.1.4). Throughout the data there are descriptions of particular moments that contributed to the making of some of the exhibited objects. However, none of the talk is of technical detail. Instead, the narratives make relevant sociality and events in a number of ways. So the talk is not of how to make, but rather, the conditions by which to make.

### 7.1.1 Material resources figuring as characters in a small story.

The extract shown here follows a moment when Rachel had pointed out that looking at the photos pinned to the gallery wall had helped her to understand what had been going on. She could see little clues and previous iterations of what was presented in the gallery. From this, Haley and John, as shown here, outlined how they went about working in the foundry the previous year:

#### *Extract 7.1*

- 500) *Haley*: so there are a couple  
 501) of Munich photos in there and there's the classic one that one at the top/  
 502) *John*: /'cos  
           for me one of the most significant things that happened earlier in this  
 503) project when we were in Munich - we just stuck one of Dan's pots on one of  
 504) my pieces as a kind of lead boot - so it's a thing where we were just kind of  
           putting  
 505) work on work and in work there's a photo somewhere of the one of his sort  
 506) of um like a - er whisky drinking cup thing sort of so this is sig  
 507) so although it's quite small it's quite a significant moment this idea of  
 508) balancing work balancing work on other stuff erm but then/  
 509) *Haley*: /leads to  
           something else  
 510) *John*: but then when Liz came with her first starting point which  
           was her  
 511) copper sugar bag - the first thing I wanted to do was fill it with lead which is  
           one of Dan's  
 512) materials and I didn't - the thing I did was my second choice thing was to  
 513) completely encase it in plaster in that piece there so that was one of the first  
 514) things I did in this project completely encase it in plaster

The narrative describes a shared past event. All of the group of exhibiting makers were 'at' the storyworld. The core of the story is told by John (502-508) but its contextual occasioning by Haley (500-1), followed by her apparent completion of John's line with "leads to something else" (509), sets it as jointly-told. The story sets out in a sequential way a series of events. At a fundamental level the story recounts how the makers juxtaposed various pieces of work at the foundry. However, in addition to the fairly straightforward reporting of past events, I suggest that the frequency of material resources indicate the participants' bond with materials and stuff, artefacts and objects.

I suggest that there are two levels of something that might be glossed as ‘material engagement’ going on in this extract. Firstly, the numerous references to all sorts of material resources. As Haley and John tell it, the story is saturated with references to material resources: photos (501), pots (503), pieces, and lead boot (504), the close repetition of work, and photo (505), a whisky drinking cup (506), work (508), stuff (508), copper sugar bag (510), lead, and materials (511 & 512), and plaster (513). Also the word ‘thing’, which I shall return to shortly. And secondly, the geographic setting of the storyworld is mentioned. The first story (502-8) is set explicitly in “Munich” (503), a spatial reference, to be sure, but I try to set out shortly why I think it can also be counted as materially-relevant, not solely as a locative reference.

John puts the objects and artefacts at the centre of the story, insofar as very little else is referenced. He prefaces the event as “significant” and seems to (at least partially) minimise his own agency in the event and its significance by his choice of words. John says that the significant “thing” “happened”: “happened” suggests that things came to pass and that there might have been an element of chance or at least of being unplanned. The objects in the story appear to be at least as agentive as John, who was one of the people “just kind of putting work on work” (504-5).

I will return to ‘thing’ as a recurring lexeme, but for the moment I draw on its lack of specificity or its vagueness and suggest that it contributes to John’s lack of or reduced agency in his representation of those moments. So although the event was significant, John makes no claim for his own solo artistic authorship. Indeed he frames the event as social action through the plural pronoun “we” (503 & 504).

John calls up his resources as words, he doesn’t hold them up as objects. He is able to articulate his narrative about objects while appearing to remain engaged wholly with the material resources as linguistic references. Some of the artefacts that he refers to in his narrative are materially present as part of the exhibited body of works, amongst the items shown on the trestle tables around the gallery. John doesn’t gesture to or stand to retrieve any of the materially present resources in the room while talking. Instead he seems to ‘stay in the storyworld’. The material resources, in different ways, constitute two spatial domains. Firstly, the materially present objects are part of the ensemble of matter that constitutes the physical domain of the gallery space. They contribute to the indexing of this space as a gallery, and this particular exhibition being shown at that moment in



that gallery. The objects and the gallery are category-bound to each other, making each relevant and understandable. This makes relevant and enables the key participants' positions and actions, and licences behaviours and expectations in the event context. The material objects are partly constitutive of the narrating world. Secondly, as linguistic references they index and construct the socially-construed space of the storyworld. Haley had gestured toward a photograph as she spoke "so there's a couple of Munich photos in there and there's the classic one at the top" (501). The photos, as a general rule, are not well executed images of the objects at the show as one might see in a textbook or catalogue. Rather, they are snapshots taken as a general record of the event, and at the time of taking not thought of in terms of being exhibited in the future. As a result, I suggest many of the photos are not immediately recognisable as being of the objects in the room. Therefore, some of the objects in the room materially partly constitute the narrating world whilst their linguistic references as resources also partly constitute the storyworld. The narrative is articulated and its space constructed through language. No 'extra' layers of symbolic meaning or semiotics are 'applied' to the objects. As I discuss in chapter two, it became an orthodoxy through the twentieth century for an art object to have 'meaning', a meaning often bestowed upon it from another field and residing in sentences. Here the objects appear to be merely being referred to as themselves; almost, if you like, as characters in the story.

The word "thing" is uttered seven times during the extract (underlined in the extract) including Haley's "something" (509). 'Thing' is not used to signal a singular, unnamed, inanimate artefact or object but as a gloss for actions or process, a sort of unspecified doing. In line 502, John's "significant" is located in the relative vagueness of "thing". The use of "thing" in 504 speaks to the actions described in line 504-5: "putting work on work and in work". Although the use in line 506 pertains to the specific "whisky drinking cup" as an object, the repeated utterances of "thing" in lines 511-13 all relate to the actions that John carried out on Liz's copper sugar bag. This presents the case that almost all the material resources are named as specific items, pots and lead, for example, but "thing" is used to denote an event or happening (similar to its historic usage). The apparent vagueness and generality with which "thing" is deployed highlights the more precise referencing of the particular objects with which the material environment is marked in the talk. So in this narrative "thing" does not index the material world vis-a-vis objects but as an event consisting of a sequence of movements and

actions. Insofar as John is glossing actions with his use of the word, I would argue what he is referring to is thinking with and through the work. He is describing the process of experimenting with objects' juxtapositions. This is comparable to Haley's use of 'process' in chapter 4. Although presented using colloquial and everyday language such as "just kind of putting" (504) and "balancing" (507), these would (I argue) not have been unthinking acts. Alternatively John could have categorised events with a device that included, for example, idea, notion, and concept, words that locate his labour as cerebral or mental. John is describing how work came about, not through technical detail but by describing the physical situation by which it emerged. He narratively reconstructs the creative process as it was experienced, how the objects underwent change through their involvement in the event and became the objects at the gallery. By using "thing", he locates his thinking in the material and the event and action.

Earlier at the same event, John had uttered "things" twice just a few minutes prior to the extract above:

409) I suppose putting y'self in a position to think through things  
 410) and consider all the options and put things together in a thoughtful manner.

His uses here differ to the use in extract 7.1, yet they also sustain his position. The things in line 409 could refer to material artefacts, i.e. to think with objects. Alternatively, he might be referring to possibilities and options of actions and concepts in a similar way to the extract above. But I hold that his use in line 410 "put things together" references things as objects. This is because of the collocation of 'put' and 'together', both redolent of material and movement. Despite the ambiguity, John's usages of 'thing' are collocated with correlates of 'think' and sustain the notion in the main data of objects having an agentive role in progressing ideas. The general idea of materiality, and spatially arranging the self amongst events and objects is upheld by John's metaphor of physically positioning himself to do the thinking (409). "Putting" and "position" speak to John's spatial relationship to (or entanglement with) more than a plausible alternative such as 'gathering one's thoughts' or 'arranging ideas in your head'.

John's story of improvising with pieces of work in the foundry is said in quite informal, colloquial language. A suggestion could be made that his register almost underplays the claim of "significance". This would parallel the passivity and reduction of agency implied by "happened". John could have claimed greater

authority with grander language thus: 'I made the decision there and then to create exciting and unexpected juxtapositions of the vessels'.

### *7.1.2 Learning through material resources in small stories.*

Objects as material resources are shown to operate as characters in a narrative. In this narrative objects can be shown to operationalise learning. In this section I revisit a story told in chapter 6. It had been occasioned by Dan telling a story of students visiting to watch him at work. Dan's story was itself part of a period in the event when the chief topic had turned to the problems of language and instruction, one aspect of 'turning making into writing', an issue at the centre of the tacit knowledge orthodoxy discussed in chapter 2. Liz used Dan's story, relating her own experiences of teaching interchanging the categories of "young people" and "students", critiquing them for having limited experience and knowledge of materials:

#### *Extract 7.2. (also shown as part of 6.3)*

- 1) *Liz:* Er knowing and learning through objects and our experiences with them
- 2) and I translate that as cos I learnt through making really genuinely
- 3) through wiring a plug or putting a lightbulb in through erm
- 4) picking up something broken and try putting it back together
- 5) its really inherent in my interpretation of making
- 6) and I feel people that I've had endless conversations
- 7) about this sensory connection with the world
- 8) *Neil:* understanding materials/
- 9) *Liz:* /understanding material/
- 10) *Neil:* /just by making a bow  
and arrow
- 11) *Liz:* -yeah it doesn't even have to be as wonderful as that
- 12) and I got wiring a plug because mum couldn't dad wasn't there
- 13) it was wonderful it was a job get all my tools out and I enjoyed it

Within Liz's overall declarative utterance, I argue that three small stories centred on personal past experience are told operating to some extent as exempla. The three small stories are underlined in the text, lines 2-4, 6-7, and 12-13. As narrative fragments they are enmeshed within their cotext.

Although less saturated with material resources than the previous extract, Liz's position(ing) seems clear. This might be summarised as Liz having gained a particular type of educative experience and a way of being in the world by

interacting with materials. Liz's story underpins previous positioning she has done, establishing and aligning to the maker category. The personal past event narrative is about material engagement and identity formation. Liz appears to be saying: 'Look, I am who I am because I just got on with fixing things'. Liz's position is further exemplified a few minutes after this data excerpt. As a response to one of the other participant's comments on the difficulties of writing, Liz said this:

- 1) Bit right - bit wrong - screw loose -
- 2) Tighten it up with another word -
- 3) What tool am I missing?

Her extended metaphor of mechanical fixings transposes her way of knowing (recontextualises her resources) about objects and materials to another type of creative work, writing.

By contrast to the prefacing story about the students that had had difficulty articulating an experience of objects and materials, Liz, similarly to John, is quite precise in naming her objects. It is also, like John's, a fairly humdrum cast of objects.

In John's story I argued that his use of "thing" marked a series of spatially organised actions and procedures involving his self. Liz's references to "doing" are more explicitly marked by a series of verbs, more specific in their explanation than John's "thing". Liz's verbs are both physical and spatial in that they signal bodily involvement and spatial organisation: "putting it back together" (4), "picking up" (5), and "wiring" (3). But they are also relevant to the maker category (chapter 4) because as well as being processual, they thus also link to the work done establishing a joint concept of process. This is alluded to by one of the visitors, Neil, who underpins Liz's stance with his agreement "just by making a bow and arrow" (10).

What is quite striking is the level of everydayness and mundanity of the activities in Liz's story. The story had been occasioned by Dan's remarks on the silversmithing students who had visited his studio. Silversmithing involves specialised knowledge of particular materials, tools, techniques and practised labour. But Liz grounds her critique of the students who not had grasped what they were seeing in much more ordinary stuff. By making her point through mundane items (a plug, a lightbulb), she highlights that this was not a special

situation, it was quite ordinary in her life. References to her mum and dad in combination with the quotidian, mundane material resources also locate the story spatially. I would argue that she is placing the story in a domestic environment. In addition, the mundane items indexed to a prototypical domestic setting are recognisable to many and potentially available as a mental construct. Liz's final narrative fragment of this excerpt (lines 12-13) locates the story, and the basis of her experiential knowledge, 'knowing through doing', temporally. Her "knowing and learning through objects" – "understanding material" is thus situated longitudinally in her character. Taken together the material resources, basic and everyday, and the historic setting of the story enable Liz to emphasise the foundational and fundamental aspect of her-self. The small stories of everyday life have shown objects as characters that enable learning.

Liz's first and third stories can be read as inward-looking in the sense that she is talking of an up-close focussed attitude to a task at hand and a personal attitude to the world. But I suggest her use of such mundane resources and exempla makes the story and hence its point available and open to all. An outward-looking perspective and a sense of social engagement is seen in the middle small story (6-7) where Liz talks of "endless conversations" and a "sensory connection to the world.

### *7.1.3 Objects as the basis for thinking.*

Haley establishes a very similar position to Liz through telling a story of her education. This excerpt is from the same event as Liz's story above, it is from about one hour earlier in the session. Haley's sensitisation to materials is declared quite explicitly in the following extract as she underpins her position of having learnt through materials using categories relevant to being a maker:

#### *Extract 7.3*

- 1) *Haley*: I mean I trained in metal
- 2) and that's where my knowledge of working with stuff comes from
- 3) but I don't just work in metal
- 4) but I think I approach material erm like handling metal
- 5) and what I notice in the world is I do that too
- 6) so I will experience say y'know issues that are going on in life through that as well
- 7) so the trading of metal and what that means
- 8) um I have a sister who's a ↑metal expert<sup>↑</sup>

- 9) so we've talked about that a lot its always been very important  
 10) so I understand the world and economics and all those things through metal  
 11) through that thing.

Haley's message is a firm echo of Liz's intention in the fixing the plug story: that of a personal epistemological position as the result of an empirical engagement with the stuff of the world. Haley's and Liz's extracts are comparable in what they claim for their respective speakers. It is also interesting to note that, like Liz's lines 6 and 7, Haley reports on an episode of spoken interaction in lines 8 and 9, drawing on the experience of talking with her sister. Both are emphasising sociability as part of how they have evolved their ways of meaning-making.

Haley opens her turn with a very short narrativised piece of personal history to substantiate a claim about her "knowledge" in the first two lines. This is a significant portion of her life on two counts. Firstly, symbolically through her personal epistemology, this is where her knowledge "comes from". And secondly, temporally, she is referring to a number of years studying, as elaborated over the rest of the extract.

Haley's personal engagement is clearly rooted in metal. She says that word six times during her turn. It is a specific material resource but she uses it to make a claim for a broader epistemological outlook than its specificity might immediately suggest. She does this in two ways. Firstly, in lines 2-4 Haley claims that her training in metal has informed her "knowledge of working with stuff". She uses the discourse marker "but" on lines 3 and 4 to qualify her position, firstly away from metal "I don't just work in metal", and then to acknowledge metal for her "approach (to) material". Alternating the specificity of "metal" with the generic currency of "stuff" and "material" allows her to claim a broader outlook. Secondly, metal has provided a vehicle to understanding other (non-material-based) concepts and practices, namely "trading" (7) and "economics" (10). Both of these examples show Haley looking out from a closed dialogue with a material at her bench, contradicting a recurring trope in craft literature. This global view is emphasised by Haley's claim to "understand the world" metaphor in line 10. An understanding of economics and trading has come partly through Haley's interaction with her sister "a metal expert", in lines 8 & 9. This sense of social engagement is comparable to the social engagement in the middle of Liz's 'plug story'.

Like John in 6.1 and Liz in 6.2 Haley deploys “through” to illustrate the way(s) in which she has learnt by means of engaging with artefacts/material resources. “Through” is deployed as metaphorical preposition, “Through wiring a plug”, “through metal”, and “through things” do not, of course, mean to literally pass through something, but the point is that “through” is both spatial and temporal in its allusive affordances. ‘Through’s’ use again links the speakers to the main themes of time and materiality as part of the work done positioning amongst themselves as makers (chapter 4). The two previous sections have noted elements of social interaction in accounts of materially-grounded epistemologies where Haley and Liz referenced talking with others. In the next section I discuss how material resources enable social interaction through narrative.

#### *7.1.4 Objects enabling social and affiliative bonds.*

The argument so far has largely circulated around the mundane nature of most of the resources referred to. In contrast to the apparent mundanity of the objects is the amount of work they appear to do in the narratives. One aspect that this affords is the potential availability of these resources to other participants and to index relationships and relevance in their experiences, thus enabling social cohesion. As much as that suggests an outward socialising trajectory from the narrative, the following story, deploying equally routine material resources, is, I suggest, much more ‘inward-facing’ to the key participants, owing to its quite specific categorisation of events and materials.

In chapter five I showed how Ben, one of the visitors to the event had spoken about Dan, one of the key participants. Ben spoke of how Dan had rejected the traditional skills that he had learned when he trained as a silversmith, thus positioning Dan as somewhat dissident. The following extract follows directly from that episode, therefore Ben’s preceding lines thus serve as a preface and opening to Haley’s lines shown here. These in turn launch turns from Jane and John before returning to Ben:

## Extract 7.4

- 312) *Haley*: but I look at his work that he was making when he first finished  
 313) college and I see the correlation now like I do with my own work  
 314) you know and lots of I think it was always very playful so  
 315) there's the playful nature and it was always about that material  
 316) so his sensibility with working with a material is still there  
 317) *Jane*: he used the he used the Jerwood it seemed to me to put something  
 318) new out there and that was a kind of work in progress/  
 319) *John*: /↑salt stuff wasn't it↑  
 320) *Haley*: - salt  
 321) *Ben*: yeah

Haley appears to do two things in her turn (312-316). Firstly, she aligns her own work to some of the qualities she perceives in Dan's, possibly, or potentially seeking to position herself as similar to Dan. She ascribes a positive evaluation through the "correlation" with a "playful nature". The overall intention of her lines might possibly be to align to Dan's dissident position set out by Ben. Haley also trained as a silversmith but now tends to work with less valuable materials in less conventional ways. But secondly, and of more importance, is her orientation to materiality voiced in 316. Haley's deictic choices shift from the specificity of "*that* material" (315) to the comparatively vague "a material" (316). This shift in categorisation reflects her own and Dan's parallel moves from silver to alternative materials in their work. In setting up this parallel shift in working practices we might see evidence of Haley seeking affiliation with Dan. I argue that Haley's use of "*that* material" refers to silver. Haley is talking about Dan's work in the past and describes it as "always very playful" (314), referring to when he used to work with silver. Her use of "*that*" 'points' back to past time and signals to others her knowledge of Dan's professional history. The following utterance "his sensibility with working with a material is still there" (316) is set in the present. The "a" material therefore refers to the less material-specific work Dan has made recently and in the present. So although not describing how work is made, references to materiality are central to an assessment of a maker's work and this assessment foregrounds the maker's relationship and interaction with materials. The way that materials are categorised in these few lines are more tightly indexed, or bound, to an in-group's understanding than any of the material resources in the previous examples. Such categorisation practices enable and signal affiliative bonds as part of interactional processes.



The next few lines in the extract (317-321) show the participants highly attuned to a particular material category in the talk, namely salt. That awareness is bound to social context and carries with it inferences and histories. I shall try to unpack this view here. Haley's evocation of Dan's more recent work enables Jane to reference a body of Dan's work in lines 317-318. In doing this Jane, a ratified participant (Goffman 1981), signals her knowledge of it. Jane's knowledge is inferred by the term "Jerwood", a single-word gloss for a particular award and exhibition well established across the crafts. In his turn, John signals his knowledge, categorising the material that the work was partially made of, "salt" (319). His assertion is positively recognised by Haley in the next line and then by Ben immediately after. From the vagueness of Haley's "a material" to the specificity of John's "salt" the four interlocutors have between them referenced and identified a body of Dan's work.

The single resource "salt" does considerable work and makes possible the recognition or recall of particular work at a particular exhibition, one that I infer from this interaction all interlocutors have a common memory or recall of. It binds the present social context of the talk event to the social context of another place and time of the exhibit and the larger context and discourses of craft events. At the moment of utterance the word salt received no unpacking or explanation. Its use signalled a sort of tacit 'category entitlement' "obviating the need to ask how the person knows; instead, simply being a member of some category is treated as sufficient to account for, and warrant their knowledge of a specific domain" (1996: 133).

That said, it could also be considered that on this reading the participants are to some extent talking to themselves. They do nothing to unpack or enumerate the pair of glossed indexed terms, salt and Jerwood, to the other interlocutors. It is possible that many of them, given the social make up of those who attend gallery talks might very well be aware of The Jerwood and/or the work that Dan made for it. But only possibly, they might equally not know about them. Jerwood is a sort of double-index, as a biennial event it had rotated between a selection of disciplines including metal, ceramics, and textiles. By talking about Dan, the participants are indexing the metals iteration of the event. It is a moment where the talk is doing at least as much to position the interlocutors amongst themselves as it is in presenting the project to the other ratified participants in the room.

The affiliation amongst the group might be at the expense of communicating or making bonds outside the group. Nonetheless, this enables them to cohere, consistent with a community of practice (Meyerhoff 2004, Wenger 1999) as their language-use constitutes co-membership (Erikson & Schultz 1982). It could be argued that what the interlocutors are presenting to the other people in the room is a performance of their jointly made category entitlement. But equally such moves potentially exclude equal participation rights to the other participants. The affiliative work done in interaction in a very short period of time, over a very few number of utterances, between a number of participants shows the potential, and possibly, the reality of 'discursive access' in the room. This case shows that the category (as it could well be called) 'ratified participants' includes in its embrace a range of subject positions. To some extent in this extract we can see 'ratifying' in action, as a number of participants, one of the key participants and two visitors, build affiliative bonds, following Haley's positioning alongside another key participant, Dan.

In this section I have shown how material resources figure in small stories: as characters, as instrumental in learning, and as vehicles to make affiliative bonds in the here-and-now. In the next section I analyse space in the participants' narratives.

## **7.2 Space.**

In the previous section I made the case that in particular instances the exhibitors used material resources to underpin the work they had done to position themselves as makers. There is very little talk across the data of how things are made. Talking about how things are made is an expectation that might be extrapolated from much of craft's canonical literature that has highlighted the technical and instructional (Harrod 1999, Adamson 2010). My claim is that the participants exhibit an affiliation to the material world through a more diffuse, subtle, or pervasive uses of linguistic material resources and references in line with Deppermann's comment that "The hallmark of positioning, however, is to recover how positions are invoked by more implicit, indexical practices" (2015: 382-3). In some of those analyses my attempts to look at how material resources were being used became necessarily entangled with the concept of space. Particularly in John's 'Munich' story, I claimed that his categorisation of material resources such as pots and lead boot inferred a particular space, the foundry, as

much as they underpinned his position as a maker. In this section and the next I turn more fully to space and consider it from two perspectives. Both of these take note of the view that space and place are often subordinated to time in many understandings of narrative (Baynham 2003). One perspective draws on the spatial content *in* narratives, and the other perspective examines the spatial structuring *of* narratives. Or, to put it another way, one addresses topic, the other addresses organisation in storyworlds.

The two extracts that I turn to in fact follow each other sequentially as part of a relatively extended turn from Liz. I have presented the two extracts separately because, as I show, although they form part of an extended utterance, the way material and spatial resources are used is different between the two parts. The data occurred around thirty minutes into the event. As such, much of the talk was still topically related to the ‘mechanics’ of the project, what had gone on, when, and where. Liz spoke about one aspect of how the four makers had worked together, the decision to all work at Haley and John’s adjoining studios: “we just decided between us all that it would be a good place for these activities to be carried on” (Liz).

#### *Extract 7.5*

- 1) *Liz*: Dan and myself - we left our own workshops
- 2) and we journeyed to Haley and Johns workspace
  
- 7) and there was a sense of leaving something behind,
- 8) I don’t know if Dan felt this - I think he did -
- 9) and going off into something new and unexpected

She would regularly travel across London with Dan, commenting “and there was a sense of leaving something behind, I don’t know if Dan felt this, I think he did, and going off into something new and unexpected”. Liz doesn’t spatially locate her story in any particular place but places herself and Dan (who was absent from this event) at the deictic centre of the journey using a spatial metaphor to talk about her feelings. She does this by saying “this sense of leaving something behind” (7) and “going off into something new” (9). What she leaves behind (her workspace) as a literal reference in line 1 comes to be signalled or marked by her tools. This is shown in the next excerpt and her tools provide a sense of stability that is temporally unalterable, she could leave it “for one day or a year”, the tools will still be there. The spatially-oriented journey story in the preface is literal, Liz

and Dan did travel across London, although here it is related through felt emotions “sense(d)”. Movement in the narrative and the spatial dislocation that Liz felt, a feeling that she extends to Dan in his absence, is relayed through geographic vagueness. There is a lack of named location, distances, or timescale, and references to emotional states.

In the next excerpt, the continuation of Liz’s utterance, there is an inversion of the two main aspects of the first excerpt. Firstly, the vagueness by which the geographic space of something large, London, is replaced by some measure of precision in talking about a much smaller space. And secondly, the literal representation of a journey becomes a metaphorical representation of a journey.

*Extract 7.6*

- 10) *Liz*: In your own space there’s a sense of comfort there
- 11) ↑there’s everything the same↑
- 12) I don’t know if your workspace is the same
- 13) but I can leave mine for one day or a year and nothing will change
- 14) that ↑hammer↑ is still there
- 15) those ↑pliers↑ are still there
- 16) ↑and↑ I can trust that and that has a place in a maker’s journey

The topic of the first line, continued though this excerpt, represents a huge shift in represented scale from the last lines of the preceding excerpt. From the spatial (and temporal) vagueness of London as a transitory space, Liz abruptly relocates to the particularity and relative smallness of her “own space”.

The place that Liz is leaving behind is her “own space” (10), substantiated as a “workspace” two lines later (12), as distinct from a domestic space or home. However, the use of “comfort” to describe her association with the space is suggestive of domesticity or of emotional attachment. “Leaving something behind” and “comfort” combine to affect the emotive bond between Liz and the space. However, Liz does not describe the space visually or speak about its size or architecture, the space is established by referencing two material resources. These are, “hammer” (14) and “pliers” (15) deictically placing them both as “there” (15), at her workshop. Liz is again calling on fairly mundane resources. As in her story of wiring a plug, hammer and pliers are everyday tools and quite often found in a basic maintenance toolbox in any home. The quotidian nature of these tools makes the story of her specific personal attachment to a space rather more generic as an exemplum, as the things that mark it out need no explaining

or unpacking, they are mentally available to many recipients. This should be considered against the possibility that Liz could have referred to more specialist tools as a jeweller. She could have categorised her material resources differently, sizing mandrel, drawplate, or stake are relevant to any jeweller. They would position her more specifically as a jeweller, but by contrast, would make her point less available to those present who weren't jewellers.

"Hammer" and "Pliers" are much less tightly bound to the group of makers than the example of "salt". Salt was used as material resource (7.1) where I suggest that the group of participants are to some extent talking amongst themselves. Liz's narrative is topically oriented to or around a particular place, her workspace and that space is marked by small material resources. By the end of the extract there is a return to the idea of a travel story in "maker's journey" (16). The term 'maker's journey' appears to be more allusive or metaphorical, but it is grounded in the concrete reality of the hammer and pliers. The literal journey, travelling across London, had signalled a sense of instability, or at the least uncertainty, "leaving something behind" and "unexpected" in the transitory space of London. This has been stabilised, anchored down, by the positive evaluation, the reassurance alluded to in Liz's hammer and pliers, the security of her workplace. She has returned to the starting point, the spatial location of the first line of the first excerpt; hers and Dan's "own workshops".

The way that space figures in these narratives underpins Liz's position as a maker through the emotive bond to her workspace. Liz locates a sense of place and relates it to a feeling of stability by calling up two material resources: the small and mundane hammer and pliers. The spatial specificity of Liz's stability in her workshop is further defined by the sense of alienation she identifies in another person's workshop in the next extract. The extract comes three minutes or so after the two small stories just looked at. Topically, the talk was still circulating around how the four exhibiting makers had worked together during the project and followed some remarks that Haley and John's studios were separate but next to each other, Liz said:

*Extract 7.7 (also shown as 5.10)*

- 18) Liz: I noticed that there was this funny thing where it took a while  
 19) to get into John's room - ↑did you notice that?↑ Because in a way  
 20) that I think noticing that language of tools and making-language if you  
 21) go into somebody else's space, well like John's, you go in  
 22) and you don't really engage because you don't really know what things do.

- 23) You can appreciate them for what they are  
 24) and you might have seen someone use that tool or go through that process.  
 25) ↑But generally↑ you are observing, spectating, and you come back again.  
 26) So in a way that's why we gravitated to our space

This is part of an extract looked at in chapter five (5.2) for its pronouns and role as an exemplum but here I want to consider its spatial orientation. Firstly, like the previous example this is a travel story but on a much smaller scale than the previous extract. Liz “go(es) in” (21) and “come(s) back” (25) from “somebody else’s space” (21). The deictic centre of the story also appears to be Liz, she is the one who moves and is “observing, spectating” (25), which strengthens the story’s verisimilitude in Liz’s experience.

The general message of Liz’s story appears to be the level of discomfort or alienation that she feels in John’s workspace because she finds little to recognise in the scene before her. In the previous story her material references were mundane but they were also precise and indexed to a particular place. Pliers and a hammer are commonplace but she referred to *that* hammer, *those* pliers using two deictic terms to specify them. In this story the references are much more vague using “tool(s)” (20 & 24), and “things” (22). Her lack of recognition is reflected by her lack of agency in the story. Apart from Liz’s movement, into and back again, she is remarkably passive, “observing, spectating” (25), she doesn’t “really engage” (22). Liz is as likely to see hammers and pliers in John’s workspace as her own, or in any number of workshops for that matter, but it is their specificity to “what things do” (22) and the predicates and activities bound to *those* and *that* tools that, for her, mark out a space and her relative comfort and familiarity within it.

Across both of Liz’s stories there is a focus on tools as material resources, which in some regards aligns to a canonical expectation of a practitioner talking about tools and their important relationship to them. But for Liz, in these episodes, tools as material resources are afforded situated meaning, and constitute space and feelings about space. They are not by any means being used as elements of a ‘how to’ or technical description. Additionally, Liz is not ‘painting a picture with words’, she does not really describe the workshops in visual terms. The tools are not used to orient the storyworld in terms of spatial layout, nonetheless the listener is left with a view on her attitude to them. Liz uses the tools as semiotic devices to orient herself and other characters to particular dispositions as told through narrative.



Taking the 'Munich photos' as a material resource we can see that in the first line (500) the photo enables the telling of the narrative and consequently enables John to establish a storyworld. Taking these two claims in turn, the chunk of talk from line 502-508 is a story largely told by John but co-occasioned with Haley. Haley's two lines (500-01) and her gesturing toward a particular photo, "the classic one", preface and enable John's story opening in line 502. From this, he goes on to describe the process of juxtaposing various pieces of work that he considered 'significant'. The photo's presence is a vital aspect of the story being told, without it Haley would not be able to index the Munich project and provide the cotext and preface to John's story. Indexing the targeted photo as a 'Munich photo' makes relevant the event's context. At each of the data events the opening moments were used to explain the project they had been working on and the exhibition's background and context. This always involved talking about the time they had spent exhibiting together at a self-curated and managed event the previous year in Munich and how those events had been a preface to the present project. Munich becomes an indexical gloss for that event and period of shared experiences. Munich is, then, a particular Munich inferring the happenings at the foundry. Munich is never referred to by way of its cafes, churches, museums, or monuments. From Haley's preface using a material resource, John can then very easily move from the narrating world to the storyworld for the spatiotemporal locating of his story with the line "when we were in Munich" (503). Like Liz's establishment of a domain with hammer and pliers, John and Haley set out a particular place by reference to a material resource, a particular photo.

The clear difference here is that Liz's resources are evoked, they are linguistic references to mundane tools and as objects they are not present in the narrating world. Haley and John make use of an object present in the narrating world to evoke the storyworld.

Once transported to the storyworld, we find it elaborated and populated by material resources. During lines 503-08 John tells a largely descriptive narrative of a particular episode. The participants are not offered a description of the foundry but rather a sequence of activities "of putting work on work" (504). Although descriptive, there is nothing in his talk that maps out or illustrates the space topographically. This is perhaps natural enough as John is keen to emphasise what happened in the foundry and assign significance to the event. From this we might conclude that for John, the spatial arrangement of the foundry and within that the spatial organisation of the artefacts is of secondary



importance. The apparent joint primary concerns are, firstly, the fact that the artefacts became variously spatially organised relative to *each other*. This is materially important. And secondly, that this happened during a by now well-rehearsed period of the overall project, which is socially important.

John maintains an orientation to the photos on line 505 when he says “there’s a photo somewhere”, keeping the story embedded spatially and temporally. The photo he is looking for at that moment would appear to be one that validates his story of placing objects in particular ways. This is interesting as the actual objects referred to in the story are in the gallery, thus the artefacts and objects in the storyworld are present at the narrating world. The objects, the “lead boot”, the “whisky drinking cup thing”, are not configured in the way they were described in the story, but nonetheless they are in the room with John at that time, but he orients his attentions to the photographs. One reading of this is John is not making the most of the material resources at hand in the gallery space, he doesn’t stand, look for, and retrieve the objects to demonstrate what happened. But this would be to lose touch of two things, firstly that John is describing the events contextualised and situated in the storyworld of the foundry space. The story is about what happened in Munich. And secondly, the story had been launched from Haley’s prior turn advocating the value of the photos as reflective resources, an approach that John sustains by his continued orientation to the photos. The photos thus operate as a portal between the here-and-now of the narrating world and the there-and-then of the storyworld. John’s articulation of his concerns, his narrativisation of experience and argument, seems to be prioritised over and above the affordances of the immediately available ‘actual’ objects around the room. By working with material resources, John, as a crafts practitioner, has shifted from the materially-bound to the linguistically- enabled.

The excerpts discussed in this section demonstrate that space can be a prime organisational axis of small stories. I have shown how spatial aspects can be the content of small stories as well as providing the structuring devices within the narrative as it is told. Liz displays considerable investment in her workspace as she delineates its presence through the evocation of small, fairly mundane tools. Liz positions herself in, and of, the workshop by the sense of stability she appears to find there. Its importance to her is amplified when this small story is seen bracketed by the preceding and succeeding stories. Firstly, there is the instability suggested by being in transit across London. And secondly, the relative

alienation of another person's workshop and the peculiarity of its tools. The specificity of her own workshop is emphasized in her narrative. The detachment she feels in another workshop is another craft workshop. Potentially, on a macro view they are quite similar, much more similar than visiting the back-office of a bank, or a hospital reception desk, for example. Perhaps this points to the way that the crafts disciplines have been superficially homogenised? (Chapter Two).

Spatial references and concepts form the content of Liz's narratives but they also structure them. Her first story about travelling across London features processual verbs "leaving" and "journeyed", for example, implying sequentiality. But any sense of temporal movement is negated in her second story where "everything is the same...nothing will change...still...still". With time stripped from the narrative, it becomes all about establishing place. By Liz's third narrative, temporality, as an inevitable aspect of movement, is reinstated as she speaks of moving toward and then shortly returning from another (John's) space. But time is no more or less of a structure in this narrative than space. If place was some kind of backdrop here (Baynham 2003), then it would be a pretty dull backdrop. There is next to no detail or description offered at a visual or spatial-arrangement level. The way that space is constituted by objects and tools, and how Liz is dis-invested in John's space, is a thematic continuation of the evocation of Liz's investment in her own space.

Topographical description is also absent from John and Haley's conversation. Material resources keep John 'in' the storyworld. Many of the objects he was talking about were also in the gallery with him, he could plausibly have 'come back into' the narrating world and made his point with the actual objects. But the point of the story is that something happened 'then', at that time (in Munich) and he remains with linguistic references to the objects. When John does feel the need to work with objects, it is to a photo that he turns, "there's a photo here somewhere", so even the move to objects is to one that shows 'then' rather than an object, "the whisky drinking cup" itself, that is in the narrating world. In all these narratives, space, place, and event are co-implicated to a degree that, arguably, subordinates time.

### 7.3 The spatial design of narratives.

In the next few examples I move from place and space as topically relevant and move toward spatial resources as being more instrumental in the design and organisation of the narrative.

The following extract shows how a small story is organised and mobilised using a spatial metaphor. The narrative is not topically about a particular place or space but spatial references are central to its design. The relevant lines are at its beginning and end: lines 2, 12 and 14. To summarise the content of the small story, Jane is resisting linear representations of task-completion and work structures to present her spatialised approach to such problems.

#### *Extract 7.9*

- 68) *Jane*: but the way you talked about the thinking behind it  
 69) y'know you've got that diagram on the other side a kind of sequential erm  
 70) *John*: yeah  
 71) *Jane*: consequences route through but it doesn't always work like that -  
 72) *John*: ↑it didn't work like that at all↑ we set that up as a kind of/  
 73) *Jane*: /↑no↑/  
 74) *John*: /opening gambit  
 75) *Jane*: - ↑but that's you know↑ it's always it seems we expect I've said to you  
 76) searching for this ryyz.. arborific tree-like kind of logical way of thinking  
 77) *John*: - mmm -  
 78) *Jane*: whereas I think a lot of creative people think sort of more  
 79) rhyzomically so it's from the ↑centre kind of outwards↑  
 80) - and I know in writing that I've been doing recently kind of essays  
 81) I've been writing them from the middle outwards struggling with erm how that

As part of the exhibition, the key participants had made a large free-standing chalkboard. One of the uses to which it was put was to show a timeline, a graphic representation of key moments during the project. This was intended to aid visitors' understandings of the project. The extract above shows Jane querying and challenging the way in which the graphic representation, "that diagram" (69), had been drawn.

She describes the timeline graphical representation as "sequential" (69) and "arborific" (76), both terms suggesting linear, progressive structures. Resisting the linear, progressive concept of 'a begets b begets c', implicit in such models,

Jane's alternative conceptualisation is a spatial model set in the narrativised fragment of her account at the end of the turn, "the centre kind of outwards" (79), "the middle outwards" (81). Both of these utterances are formulations of the same concept, of a spatial construct about a centre hosting centrifugal movement. The task at hand, "thinking" (76) or "writing" (81), is accomplished along the centrifugal trajectory.

The spatial model is underpinned by the metaphorical use of "rhizomically" (78, sic, assumed to be intended as 'rhizomatic'). Jane is drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) botanic metaphor of rhizomes and trees, "the contrast symbolises different styles of thought and writing" (Mautner 2005: 534). Making the distinction between arboreal structures and the open systems of rhizomes, Jane's model counters a progressive linear representation and proposes something closer to an open network. The point I want to make is that Jane's turn is not topically about space or place, neither is the narrative set in a particular place. Rather, spatial metaphors are used to organise and structure the telling of her narrative. Jane is mobilising an argument through telling a story, narrative is affording her the means to challenge the representation of the project and make relevant her concerns in the local business. The spatial formulation operates as a metaphor for the spatial organisation of material, central to craftwork.

Shortly after the narrative in the previous section in which the makers exhibit co-membership around the word 'salt', jointly exhibiting prior knowledge of Dan's work, Haley takes the floor and says of Dan:

*Extract 7.10*

325) *Haley*: but interestingly perhaps this allows you to go back to some of  
 326) your first steps as well 'cos there's some work in here that he's told us about  
 327) that he's gone back to college to when he was at ↑not even at the royal  
 328) college↑ - ↑ he's gone back to Camberwell↑ when he was at Camberwell  
 329) doing his degree and brought back in some of the things he was doing then

In this small story Haley is reporting what (she says) Dan had said to his co-workers. Haley isn't directly reporting any speech attributable to Dan, but, rather the salient points of the story that "he's told us" (326). It is a small story based on a retrospective view, looking back in time to prior periods of Dan's education. Haley is making the case that in the current project, indexed by "this" in the first

line, has provided the context for Dan to re-explore some ideas from his past. But at least as important as the temporal axis in the story is the spatial indexing by which the 'going back' is accomplished. The point of the story appears to be told around places and times, but it is organised and realised entirely around categorising places. The story is rooted in the narrating world of the gallery by Haley with her words "there's some work in *here*" (326). Although Haley's use of "here" and "this" in the previous line are separated by several words, a case could be made that as a pair they work together, reinforcing each other's deictic value indicating the here-and-now and the project.

Haley then proceeds to move the storyworld back in time. The temporal axis is inferred by the deictic "when" in line 327 rather than a spatial alternative such as 'where'. The subsequent narration is oriented by the spatial categorisation of two places, the Royal College, and Camberwell. These are categories in a world of art higher education and carry shared inferences and entitlements relevant in local business. Firstly, in terms of the use of partial abbreviations or contractions of full titles: It is not seen necessary by Haley to elaborate to The Royal College of Art, a quite plausible need given the existence of The Royal College of Music, or of Surgeons, for example, also located in the same indexed geographical space, London. And Camberwell infers predicated knowledge of Camberwell College of Arts. Secondly, these two places infer members' knowledge of levels of academic qualification and thus the direction of temporal flow in the narrative. The Royal College of Art is a postgraduate only college and Dan would have studied for a master's degree there. Therefore the line "when he was at not even at the Royal College he's gone back to Camberwell" (328) indexes a temporal linear regression in the storyworld from the 'now' of the narrating world, "in here", going back to his first degree studies at Camberwell. All of these places, and all they represent, are part of the discourses and contexts that frame the participants' professional lives.

The recurring theme of the story is "going back", stated on each of lines 325, 327, and 328. Going back can be interpreted as spatial or temporal, or both. As a story about Dan's past, the temporal axis is unavoidable. But the metaphor "first steps" (326) speaks to a bodily and spatial orientation and Haley marshals her story through spatial references to particular places.

The 'going back' done through the story results in the work in Dan's past being "being brought back in" (329) which I suggest speaks to a gathering, pulling together, a centripetal trajectory, a further spatial metaphor.

The preceding small story is of 'going back', ostensibly in time, but accomplished through spatial indexes to the participants' professionally-contextualising discourses. The next small story proceeds from a temporal reference but shifts to being structured around spatial references.

John had been talking about the differences he felt between the typical working pattern of designing and making a commission for a client, and how he had gone about working on the joint project. He spoke about the different patterns and procedures of working for a client and working directly with his peers. John commented that the work with his peers did not have to address utility or function, but it had emphasised how time had felt accelerated and concentrated while working on the project. His evaluation that "this is kind of it's a kind of accelerated sketchbook of stuff" concludes on line two below, and affords Haley's floor-taking:

*Extract 7.11*

- 380) *Haley*: well interestingly/  
 381) *John*: /sketchbook of stuff/  
 382) *Haley*: /in the work we all do in the time phase  
 383) that we were doing this I know that there were days when I was working on  
 384) this but then on other pieces of work during the day so I was going back/  
 385) *Visitor*: /it affects your state of mind what you're learning in both projects/  
 386) *Haley*: /and so through working on other work and things that are going on  
 387) it all feeds in and you go back and forwards -  
 388) - so must have been doing the same working on other things

Regarding the overall structure of the excerpt, the visitor's words in line 385 appear to separate Haley's turn into two utterances, both constituting parts of the same small story. The first part is prefaced in line 382 and elaborated in the next two lines. The second part, after the visitor's line (385), continues the story but sees it perform the extra function of exemplifying the first part of the story.

John had set 'the feeling of time', by my interpretative gloss, as a topical theme over the course of his turn. Thus temporality is the topical context of Haley's coming talk that occupies the majority of this extract.

Haley attends to the topical context in her narrative utterance (383-4), saying “time phase” (382), “days” (383), and “day” (384). And her narrative is deictically anchored to the narrating world by “doing *this*” and “working on *this*” as references to the exhibited work. The narrative is about oscillating between ‘this’ work, i.e. the project, and other ongoing work during the working day and is recognised in the visitor’s words “both projects” (385).

Having established her turn by attending to temporality as a contextually relevant topic, Haley turns to spatial resources to organise the narrative’s evaluative components. The evaluation starts with the discourse marker “so” toward the end of line 384, continuing after the visitor’s line as Haley retakes the floor with another discourse marker “and so” (386). Haley’s resources turn to spatial allusions over this moment, with “going back” (384), “through” (386), and “back and forwards” (387) all coalescing to index spatial movement. The oscillation between works alluded to in Haley’s earlier lines has shifted from being settled in a “time phase” to spatial and material movement, possibly indexed to embodiment via “*you* go(ing) backwards and forwards” (387). As with the previous example, (Royal College and Camberwell), a story’s temporal axis has been organised and articulated with spatial categories.

The pronominal shifts across Haley’s turn locate her explicative preface as shared and common between the exhibitors, with “we” used twice (382-3). This is descriptive and explicative, but it also warrants greater veracity to her story through basing it in group experience. The small story exemplum, relying on “know” for its evidential heft, shifts to personal experience and knowledge with three uses of “I”. She then moves back to “you” (387), making her argument recontextualisable and available to others.

#### **7.4 Stories in motion.**

The data shows a concept or theme that runs across almost all of the extracts looked at, movement. None of the situations discussed are in stasis, people and objects are animated. In locating small stories that are organised by, orient to, or are topically about space, temporality and chronology are frequently still in evidence. Spatial reference can frequently be shown to be prioritised as the organising axis but rarely at the complete exclusion of references to time.

Perhaps this has something to do with the presence of processual talk, of things happening and being done?

In her two workshop stories Liz firstly “left” her workshop and travelled with Dan as part of her story of a “maker’s journey”. Then she moved in and out of John’s space, as in: “it took a while to get into” and “you come back again”. And finally she “Gravitated to our space”. While underpinning her position as a maker by telling about how wiring a plug was foundational to how she “learnt through making”, her narrative features a chain of verbs that all suggest motion: “picking up”, “putting...in”, “putting it back together” and “getting tools out”.

Liz’s use of “through” is paralleled in Haley’s usage as she tells how she “understand(s) the world...through metal”, both employing a spatial metaphor.

And Haley, when describing a working day and the oscillations between different projects, went “back and forwards” “through” working. Haley also spoke of Dan “go(ing) back” to “first steps” and that he “brought back in some of the things”.

Jane’s resistance to the “arborific” (sic) representation of the project on the chalkboard prompted a conceptual model for essay-writing of centrifugal movement “from the middle outwards”.

And John spoke of “putting work on work” in the foundry before saying “Liz came” (to the studio).

Movement appears to link the stories, seeing material resources used to underpin their speaker’s positioning as a maker. Those stories are topically oriented to, or structured by spatial resources. In the introduction to this chapter I used as a point of departure an earlier finding that as part of the work done by the participants formulating and coalescing to the category of maker, they had also oriented to concepts of time, material, and process. I worked with ‘material’ as outlined in the beginning of this section. Here I suggest that stories in motion return the analysis to another of those concepts, process. Spatial and material resources appear to animate elements of stories rather than, for example, provide descriptive yet static backdrops or maps in narrative episodes. A concern for movement, here largely exhibited as “more implicit, indexical practices” (Deppermann), slightly, I suggest, hidden from obvious sight, corresponds with the participants’ concerns for *process*. In chapter 4 I show that the participants understand process as fluid, temporal thinking with materials. It appears as a concept-category around which the participants coalesce to build meanings and



understandings in the local situation. John spoke of “how we kind of push stuff about”, an utterance rich in embodied spatial resonance.

### 7.3 Conclusions.

In this chapter I have shown that the participants, the exhibiting makers as well as some of the visitors, draw on a diverse and dispersed lexicon of material resources. They substantiate their positioning as makers accomplished through orienting to categories (chapter 4) by using more symbolic means. As in previous analyses, this is done interactionally as interlocutors co-tell and afford speaker opportunity. Material resources are used to establish space, “narrative domains” (Herman 2001) in various storyworlds. But the materials do more than merely populate the scene. In 7.1 I showed how, in a narrative saturated with material resources, objects play their part as characters in a story. I showed how they facilitated learning and thinking in such a way as to expand what ‘making’ might mean, and how material categories afforded affiliation through interaction.

Material resources can substantiate place in narratives at a range of scales. Liz constructs a sense of stability in her workshop by calling up pliers and a hammer, reinforced by the destabilising effect of travelling across London. John evokes the indexed space of the Munich foundry with references to small pieces of work.

I then moved to show how material and spatial resources are used in particular cases to structure and mobilise a narrative. Jane was not talking *about* a space or a place but used spatial concepts and constructs to tell her story as she sought to position herself a maker and challenge the group’s representation of the project.

In chapter four I showed how participants had sought to make relevant and coalesce around a category and position of maker. They also exhibited concerns for concepts such as time, material, and process. This chapter thus progressed from earlier analytical findings by framing the question: in the absence of talk that is topically about making things, how does materiality feature in the data?

## **Chapter eight. Conclusions.**

### **8.0 Thesis contribution.**

This thesis contributes to knowledge by showing the use of talk in crafts practice. I show that language is an integral component of these participants' working lives. This is in contradistinction to a crafts literature that has maintained craft practice and language to be discrepant and polarised (Dormer 1997, Adamson 2007, Sennett 2008).

### **8.1 The research process.**

My interest in this research and my motivations for undertaking it arose from my professional life (1.4). I came to it from the field I have researched, with a critical perspective on the discourses that described and structured that field. As an accomplished studio furniture maker, I wanted to better understand the relationship between craft practices and language practices. To do so, I have had to learn, engage in, and use research methods new to me and to involve myself in a completely strange literature. Paradoxically, for a project that has adopted a critical position to reveal 'non-academic' language practices, I have had to work to academic conventions and modes. I am not advocating that language-in-crafts-practice should orient wholly to these ways of representation, far from it, but to effectively analyse and bring legitimacy to my argument, it is the method I have chosen. Learning to write and present in this way has been one of the most difficult parts of the project. Given the theme of interaction and working together, it became apparent that a PhD, notionally a solo enterprise, is also a social process and product. The researcher works alone amongst others; supervisors, colleagues, and other students.

The personal motivation can be explained as wanting to be a critically or theoretically engaged practitioner. And this I wanted to do by remaining 'in' practice and not wholly migrating to what I saw at the time as other disciplinary perspectives visible in the craft literature. Remaining in practice lent what I was doing, I felt, legitimacy. Not so much to do with my criticism of the craft literature being written largely from an etic perspective. But more to do with wanting to foreground compelling experience (Anderson 2006: 406) to mobilise the argument. While working on the thesis I resigned from my teaching position, my

'exit context' is different to my 'entry context'. Having no connection with art department culture means I have distanced myself from a major site of craft discourse production. On the other hand, I now have the potential to look at craft from a different position. Additionally, my studio work has cohered, positioning me differently as a practitioner.

During this PhD I have written conference papers and book chapters, not all of them directly 'of' this thesis, but as part of the overall project of being a theoretically engaged practitioner. While writing the thesis I have also maintained my studio practice. Some of the overall concepts in the research have inflected on my designing and making. For example, text, context, and cotext have helped me to think of furniture's relationship to the objects around (or in and on) it in new ways. And although not used in the research, Goffman's frame analysis has informed a body of work, and other more general thinking. I have listed these publications alongside examples of my studio work in appendix C.

As a discursively-constructed subject, aspects of what I did (and continue to do) had been partitioned from language practices. And yet I, and everyone I met in my professional life organised themselves around talk, just as in any socially-structured setting. Talk makes possible everything from discussing a design with a client to involvement in an academic conference (Chapters 1 & 2).

My overarching curiosity was directed toward understanding something of the connection that I perceived between craft practices and language.

As early research started to take shape, my questions became better calibrated and I re-state them here (from chapter 1):

- 1.1.1 *How do small stories in interaction mobilise categorisation and positioning to enable cohesion and membership amongst participants?*
- 1.1.2 *How do more symbolic language practices underpin positioning as creative professionals?*
- 1.1.3 *In what ways is the situatedness of talk co-constitutive of staging the professional self?*
- 1.1.4 *How do material resources shape the performance and production of the text?*

If I were to research craftspeople's use of talk in professional life, I needed to find or design a situation where talk might happen. Craftspeople tend to work in their own studio spaces, and although I was contesting the orthodoxy of these being 'silent' lives, talk does not necessarily figure as a constant in the work environment in the same way as in a doctor's surgery or a classroom, for example. Gallery conversations are professional situations where talk and craft objects are co-contextualised (chapter 1). I wanted to encounter, as near as is methodologically possible, naturally-occurring talk, not guided by a researcher or interviewer questions. I wanted to see what talk and craftspeople did for each other when left alone. Gallery talks fulfil this requirement insofar as they are a construction, but they are a construction that would happen with or without my research (Chapter 3).

Although I suspected, empirically, that language informed and co-constituted craftspeople's working lives, I wanted the data to lead my research. Because I had no prior experience in these research methods, this meant an extended period where the early analysis, such that it was, lacked shape and cohesion.

The orientation to small story research was serendipitous (chapter 2). I had noticed that much of the data comprised of small episodes. These were more often than not causal of each other, interconnected as a flow of socially-produced talk, but when looked at as an entire data event, they lacked the coherence and structure of a planned or scripted event. I began to think of it as small-talk, analogous to the sketches and models in studio practice, structuring and formative but normally swept away afterwards, and I wondered what the usually discarded would render. The participants' disposition to narrativise experiences and arguments, and the critical stance of small stories as a corrective to orthodox accounts, started to position the research.

Within small stories (Bamberg 2006, Georgakopoulou 2007), the participants mobilised and articulated their concerns. I have employed recognised language analysis theories and methods: interactional narratives (Andrews et al 2008, Norrick 2000, De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012), performance in the linguistic anthropology tradition (Duranti 1997, Bauman & Briggs 1990), positioning (Davies & Harre 1990, Bamberg 1997), category analysis (Schegloff 2007, Housley & Fitzgerald 2015). For these methods the subject is new, as is the data context.

Research has been undertaken on arguably similar subjects using language analysis methods: design students Oak (2004), architects (Oak 2009, 2013), building site carpenters (Holmes & Woodhams 2013), Slovakian lace makers, (Makovicky 2010). All have found that talk constitutes and maintains social and professional accomplishments. On the other hand, in the crafts literature, accounts of practitioners working together have overlooked the uses of talk in interactional situations (e.g. Revetz et al 2013). The thesis addresses a lacuna in the crafts literature.

Positioning and categories afforded a way to assess how the participants organised their world locally, against the discursively-ascribed identities that occur in more macro contexts (Chapters 4, 5, & 7). More symbolic ways in which talk underpinned this work was shown to be accomplished with inference-rich language practices such as locally relevant category predicates (chapters 5 & 7). The relevance and constitutive role of the event, as a social(ising) context, is made clear through performance and ethnopoetic methods (chapter 6). Here, a vivid case can be made of the way the event and talk shape each other, leading to the idea that the situational context takes up a participatory role, almost as an actor or character in the narratives, in a similar way to storied objects (chapter 7). The ways in which the participants worked with material and spatial resources bound their talk and concerns to the physical world. This brings a different dimension and greater scope to canonical assumptions made of technical and procedural talk about materials (chapter 7).

The co-constitutive role of the event, as revealed in performance-based features, has most likely been the greatest revelation to me. It can substantiate a claim that face-to-face situated interaction facilitates a particular type of work-as-langaging. I expand in the next section.

### *8.1.1 The event as a hybrid genre.*

Gallery conversations are a type of podium event (Goffman 1981), so as a genre they are not unique to the crafts. They more or less fit to a model visible across the arts. Comparable events might be an author being present at a book-launch, a composer or musician(s) being part of a pre or post-concert talk, a choreographer discussing their work, or perhaps closest of all, fine-artists talking at a gallery show. Nonetheless, as far as I can tell, none of these other fields or

disciplines are as grounded in literatures that dwell on the separation of their practices from language to the extent that the crafts are (chapter 2).

The analysis and discussion would tend to confirm an idea of craft knowledge being socially-distributed. Yet what appears to be talked about isn't the technologies of craft but a different type of knowing-about-craft involving the social settings and joint experiences of doing craft and being a maker. The research presents empirical evidence that what appears to be relevant to these practitioners is how networks and shared experiences enable the shaping of professional identity. In this way, the research goes some way to contradict the idea of the solo-creative, an archetype that has durationally, though not exclusively, circulated in accounts of creative practice.

Accordingly, the research reveals a pedagogic (in terms of professionally-shaping) dimension to the event that is not always made explicit when events like these are considered. The thesis has shown multiple levels of professional language use afforded to the makers. The ways these events are normatively thought of mirrors Goffman's construct of the podium event. Here we see information being given, but also understandings being jointly made amongst the participants in the here and now of social interaction. This positions the event as potentially mutually beneficial, pedagogically, across its participants. This exemplifies Rampton et al's (2015: 27) point that genres (such as gallery conversations) are the available ground-level mechanisms that can afford discursive agency in institutional structures. As such, it is necessary to look in relatively fine detail at the talk that constitutes a genre 'on the ground', animating nuanced and agentic versions of local reality. As a podium event, the makers are presenting their selves and alongside carry associated responsibilities. Although convivial, they are high stakes environments (Chapters 1 & 3). The research can be seen as a plea for more attention to be paid to the fine detail of craftspeople working together and accounting for their practices.

## 8.2 Key findings.

The four research questions map onto the four analytical chapters (4, 5, 6, & 7), however the findings and major points of discussion cut across the chapters.

### *8.2.1 How do small stories in interaction mobilise categorisation and positioning to enable cohesion and membership amongst participants?*

The participants orient to, and coalesce around the position of 'maker'.

Categories were made relevant in talk to self-identify and to identify others. As the participants took up the category of maker, they substantiated their positions by working up other categories, calling up a number of other creative practices as they sought to expand the idea of what craft is (chapter 4). On the one hand, as makers, they sought to align themselves with choreography and music, both evaluated as sharing common foundations in process and time. In a similar way, more domestic pursuits are called up as potentially analogous – cooking and gardening. These associations might be evaluated as positive or aspirational as the participants seek to form affiliative bonds in contexts further afield than craft, inferring some sort of positive fit. On the other hand, being a maker is also negotiated by making relevant categories with a negative fit. The categories of customers, people who don't make, and people who don't understand messy work, start to construct a notion of makers being different from other people (chapter 5).

The participants make relevant a concern often found in the literature vis-à-vis identity (chapter 2). Just where they see themselves and their work located in their professional world is relevant to these practitioners. The participants also work at presenting particular aspects of their selves by aligning or otherwise to particular categories. The local, interactional work done with positioning can be seen as a parallel to the macro, structuring ascriptions of identity in the craft literature. This work is accomplished through the course of their interactions. As (usually) unrecorded mutable orientations to specific contexts, local identity work done through small stories normally remains hidden from "a lens that only looks for fully fledged stories" (Georgakopoulou 2007: 146). Day-to-day concerns mobilised through communicative practices have therefore tended to remain marginalised, distinct from textual representations of craft.

However, as much as these identities have been foregrounded in this situation, they might also be resisted by ‘the same’ people in different contexts. I am not claiming that ‘maker’ has been newly formulated on the spot nor am I claiming that it will certainly be taken on into other encounters. Liz, for example might position herself differently in a room of jewellers, or amongst a group of teachers (chapter 6).

But here, in this event, the term ‘maker’ retains a plurality and lack of specificity that is of apparent use, as it allows Haley, Liz, Dan, and John with their diverse individual professional practices to come together in this context. It also enables them to position themselves beyond an orthodox categorisation of craft practices. Its vagueness simultaneously enables commonalities in their concerns in this ‘now’. Such availability has also seen some of the visitors to the events make relevant their investment in the category. Talk mobilises, at a local level, affiliative bonds; not merely those already invested in the project, their affiliation would presumably precede the events, but visitors are seen to be able to orient to a number of concerns in the here-and-now of interaction.

### *8.2.2 How do more symbolic language practices underpin positioning as creative professionals?*

Contemporary craft, similarly to other creative practices, intrinsically appraises work and people on their novelty, individuality and how they might be differentiated from others. I show that the participants are presenting themselves as being different, staging their professional selves as variant to orthodox behaviour (Chapter 5). This is done through symbolic language practices where certain references, behaviours, and expectations indexed to the event are made relevant as category-bound inferences. These practices are more implicit than the explicit orientation to the category ‘maker’ (Chapter 4). These inferences enable speakers to use counter-narratives as a way of showing difference (Chapter 5). Affiliation can also be invoked by other participants who are able access these symbolic inferences (Chapters 5 & 7).

Given the absence of technical-talk, material resources (references to artefacts and physical matter) in talk underpin positioning as a maker (Chapter 7). ‘Process’, as a word relevant to craft, enabled both cerebral and practical conceptualisations of what it means to be a maker, its various affordances enabled positioning and argumentation (Chapter 4).



These symbolic practices enable more nuanced and implicit connections to materials to become relevant, widening a narrow view of talk about materials amongst makers.

Of interest is how ideas, realisation, and the suggestion of future action have arisen from social interaction, in both the storyworlds and the narrating world. These things have happened because of people being together. The stories themselves are part of the process of the joint ventures they report on. Joint ventures caused things to happen that might not have been remembered otherwise, emphasising the value of the event as an interactional situation. This is distinct to the normal working condition for the participants of working alone. The events show the value of interaction as part of the creative process. It is something distinct from practical labour, yet it is enabling creative labour and possibly expanding narrow views of talking, and making.

### *8.2.3 In what ways is the situatedness of talk co-constitutive of staging the professional self?*

Liz's two stories show the portability and recontextualisable affordance of small story resources. Her two versions of a story drawing on the same resources show her sensitisation to the immediacy of talk's design (Chapter 6). By definition, this kind of event is small and fleeting, but within it, talk can potentiate precision in communicative practice in a way that is possibly more doubtful in a written text. A written text is portable, but this positive attribute is also problematic as it becomes generalisable and cannot be adjusted as it becomes recontextualised. A text can only be provisional, while talk can be more specific.

A performance approach to local discourse can make clear the situatedness of talk's design, clarifying its localness. An ethnopoetic approach can bring to attention the particular structure and method of talk. This is of interest if a particular group are using language in the face of dominant, hegemonic, or structuring discourses and the obligations that they imply. Blommaert has shown how an ethnopoetic approach can reveal accomplished and knowing uses of language that run counter to accepted norms of competence (2007: 219). This shows a way in which language in craft practice is used knowingly, but can remain unknown if measured by the expectations of orthodox writing.

‘Performing their work’ is something that they do, and have been enculturated to do from the routine of the art school ‘crit.’ (Oak 2004). An argument can therefore be made that an accomplished craft professional should display competence when verbalising their work. In these gallery conversations, multiple audience subject-positions, gallerists, journalists, students, and clients complexify the situation over and above some of the situations described in 2.7. Applying an ethnopoetic frame to talk makes more explicit skilful delivery, but importantly also demonstrates a separable or autonomous ‘way of languaging work’ that loosens obligations to canonical written discourse (Chapter 6).

Some implications are clear: if talk and context are mutually-shaping, then similar events need to exist for people like these participants to use language in their work to this effect. The theoretical work they have done with talk was co-constituted by the place and social context. As with the discussion on reflection in narrative, the socially-shaped results of what are accomplished with talk are apparent (Chapter 5). This questions assumptions of solo authorship as a paradigm in creative work.

#### *8.2.4 How do material and spatial resources shape the performance and production of the text?*

The analysis shows an affinity to materiality through subtle and pervasive uses of material resources in communicative practices (Chapter 7).

John’s portrayal of moving objects around is described in everyday terms that belie its reported significance. Liz uses mundane and domestic objects to stage herself as formed by them as past experiences, and stabilised by them in the present. Haley’s craft education has meant she has been able to understand other cultural practices, expanding an idea of what a craft education might be. Between Liz and Haley especially, materials connect them to a broader world. Dan’s resistance to talk is done by stating his affinity to materials and making. Additionally, “salt” has enabled local affiliative bonding by indexing a particular craftworld event and Dan’s past work.

The lack of technical detail in the participant’s use of objects in talk is reflected in how spatial references are called up. I have shown how objects feature in talk as enabling devices to explain aspects of the narrator’s experience. Allusions to space in the data seem also to afford particular ways of telling of emotive bonds

or describing the social conditions of making in the project: space does the work of showing how work gets done (Chapter 7).

Movement appears in many narratives, linking the spatial to the processual. The objects-as-characters in John's narrative, Jane's method of writing, Haley oscillating between projects, Liz's Journey across London and her difficulty moving in and out of John's workspace. Nothing is still in these stories other than the pliers and hammer in Liz's workshop that might stay in place for a year. Movement is in other narratives, references to movement but also frequent uses of verbs implying smaller moments of movement. Movement binds these stories to the concept of process, identified in chapter four as an indexical term that substantiated the category position of maker. Positioning, a method running through the data, is a spatial metaphor, and through talk, the participants are constantly taking up positions in immediate and distal contests. Talk is contingent and emergent; never finished. The interactional work done with talk enables the continual and emergent job of becoming a maker.

#### *8.2.5 Generalisability and the telling case.*

An imperative of an (auto)ethnographic perspective is to account for, describe, and consider the particular (Chapter 3). The thesis rests on the argument that the literature presents a number of generalisations about craft, not least the discrepancy between craft and language (Chapter 2). The generalisation that craft practice and language are antithetical can (I argue) be questioned by attending to the particular (Silverman 2006: 304-6). My hypotheses is that things relevant to, and constitutive of, the shaping of crafts practices are being done with language. This is for a group of practices canonically partitioned from language.

I have previously outlined the reasons for selecting the data (3.6.3), based partly on its typicality of the data-set as a whole. As a type of genre, gallery conversations are amongst the smallest operationalised aspects of structural discourses (Rampton, Maybin, & Roberts 2015: 27). When considered this way, as individuated events, it is clear that case studies, attending to "detail and particularity...concerned with the imponderabilia of everyday behaviour" (Mitchell 1984; 237), offer a framework by which to consider local business.

Following the analytical discussion (Chapters 4-7) the data is shown to have resolved to a “telling case in which the particular circumstances surrounding a case, serve to make previously obscure theoretical relationships suddenly apparent.” (Mitchell 1984: 239). Silverman argues that “Single cases are crucial” to falsifying generalisations (2006: 305). Additionally, Stake claims case studies “provide insight into an issue (or) to redraw a generalization” (2000: 237). The specificity of a telling case enables theoretical inferences to be made that are contrastive to existing generalisations. By showing the multiple uses of talk (beyond merely communicating technical knowledge), I draw on Mitchell, Stake, and Silverman’s positions on the smallness of data to advocate for a substantive link between craft practices and language.

I am clear that this research is neither a statistical representation, nor translatable to a greater populace. But, as a telling case, method and observations can be recontextualised to inform theorising and argument around comparable cases. Nevertheless, such specificity brings into question how much can be generalised from the case. Indeed, it could be said that the topical findings particular to this study are conceivably subordinate to the larger picture of what the study has set out to show, the ‘fact’ of the relevance of language in practice.

Throughout the analysis I have commented that the makers talk little, if at all, about making in terms of technical description or explanations of processes. This can, as a case-specific topical observation, be situated as an “intrinsic” case study (Stake 2000: 437), merely something interesting as a bounded phenomenon. I am not claiming that no craft practitioners ever talk about making (technically), in itself a generalisation. Additionally, it should be apparent that some of the examples discussed in 2.7 would, almost by default, involve technical talk. (Examples might include: explaining a technique or method to a customer, talking with a visiting engineer who is servicing a kiln or a table-saw, or talking through a project with an assistant). But, what I am saying is these people here do not talk about making, and this, to some extent, confounds some aspects of the crafts literature.

Technical talk is an absence worth recording in light of the craft literature, a particular context that affords this topical absence relevance. It is a contextual relevance that repositions any notion of an intrinsic case to an instrumental case, congruent with a telling case. Aspects of the literature (e.g. Harrod 1999, Koplos 2002, Adamson 2010) variously suggest that technique and material are either

central to defining work, or all that is adequately communicated between practitioners. However, the findings suggest that a jeweller has nothing to say to a furniture maker (or any other of the possible combinations in the room including other jewellers) about technique. The observation was not to claim it as generalisable, but as empirical evidence as a point of departure from the literature. It mobilises the discussion on strategies of symbolic categorisation and positioning (Chapters 5 & 7). The way that many participants are tied to the material world by making and material is exemplified by the much more symbolic and implicit mechanisms, where non-technical category-rich inferences are made through lexical selection and categorisation.

The previous paragraphs focus on larger discourse contexts. The local context provides another way of framing generalisation. The disposition to talk about how aspects of the project happened possibly 'squeezed out' technical talk due to time constraints (but at two hours long each event could conceivably have afforded plenty of opportunities for different themes to become topical). The data selected reflected the more settled, conversational periods of the talks (3.6.2, 3.6.3). One of the reasons was that more topics had become relevant, including things and concerns consistent with, but additional to, the immediate detail of the project. Even though technical talk was absent in the 'first hours', it might have been even less likely to become topicalised in the second hours as broader concerns emerged. As a particular genre (8.1.1, Chapter 1) the participants are afforded the opportunity of bolstering multiple aspects of their professional lives. Although not a unique experience for the makers, neither is a gallery talk an everyday one; the makers are out of their studios and keen to position their selves and their concerns. To talk about kiln temperatures and chisel-sharpening might simply be to waste an opportunity. The data tends to suggest the case that once gained, skills and knowledge particular to a craft are more or less taken for granted in peer-to-peer talk, or amongst ratified participants. Not, I suggest, evidence of craft skills being tacit, but rather, wilfully muted. Deeply embodied knowledge and skills are used to explore or underpin other areas of concern.

Whether contextualised by larger discourses, or the local situation, a telling case is consistent with an (auto)ethnographic CMR position (Chapter 3) "whereby general theory may be developed, since it is through the fieldworker's intimate knowledge of the interconnections among the actors and events constituting the case study or social situation, that the fieldworker is strategically placed to appreciate the theoretical significance of these interconnections" (Mitchell 1984:

240). Indeed, Mitchell's words almost make it a requirement to have the emic sensibilities conferred by being an opportunistic CMR.

### 8.3 Cohering positions across small stories.

Through the analysis, I have used Bamberg's model of narrative positioning at levels one and two (1997). My focus has been on how positions are oriented to, assigned, and resisted in the interactional moment. Bamberg's model thus provides a method by which to test or resist essentialist, more permanent identities ascribed through larger discourses. In this section, Bamberg's third level of positioning is used to look across the data to pull together momentary acts of positioning as more durable locally-produced identities.

The participants put considerable work into staging particular versions of themselves, within the context of having pre-available identities. Aspects of their biographies are visible: website presences; articles and reviews in magazines; and citations in books, for example. Clearly they are known to each other having worked together, and the visitors, as ratified participants would, I infer, have prior knowledge of the people they have come to hear. And yet, amongst the talk, work is done to maintain and (re)negotiate subject positions alongside previously available biographies. Biography-as-identity is being done as an interactional process through positioning in small stories. More nuanced positions might be taken up as and when contextually relevant and perhaps as these become relevant, they are accumulated into the larger biography. I have focussed on the four exhibiting makers. This is because, of all the participants, they embody most closely the notion of the discursively-shaped crafts practitioner.

Nonetheless, Liz, for example, has created two comparable versions of herself as someone informed by the material world across two narratives. Despite the fluidity represented by two narrating contexts, there is stability across what she has said, the context has mobilised the differences in *how* it is said. This suggests that identities in small stories are transportable and might aggregate into more stable formations.

Bamberg's method of three levels is applied to a singular narrative. But within his method seems to be an invitation to consider wider contexts "mak(ing) claims that the narrator holds to be true and relevant *above and beyond the local conversational situation*" (Bamberg 1997: 337: my emphasis) an allusion to extra-

cotextual implications. Hence, this section assesses how positioning across small stories can coalesce. This over-and-above or overarching local structuring of an identity resonates with appeals to locate instances of micro discourses informing and structuring discourse upstream in scale (Rampton et al 2015: 27). Granted, this is micro influence on larger structures as a personal project, and is still small in scale, but it does point to how normally unrecorded utterances aggregate to something more cohesive and graspable.

Bamberg cautions that the method does not necessarily answer “Who am I?” in a way that is durable beyond local contexts, presumably because it is a product of local contexts. To this must be added the subjectivity of the analyst as they decide what is relevant in an interpretative enterprise. In a sense it seems contradictory to draw together discursive moments as part of a project that has sought to locate the particularities of those moments. On the other hand, even though the research has worked with the relative abstraction of anonymised discursively-produced subjects, the project is about people. And attending to how identity constructions can coalesce across local interactional business might bring a sense of ‘re-peopling’ the research.

### *8.3.1 Haley’s extended notion of making.*

Haley makes clear that her education, and subsequent worldview, have been grounded in metal (excerpt 6.5). Her ability to understand “trading”, “economics”, and “issues that are going on in life”, is, she says, because of her training in metal. A craft education has afforded a way of understanding other concepts, and this disrupts a narrow view of crafts education that offers only a tight focus on practical manual skills. An orthodox view is of close attention to matters at hand on the bench, a narrow focus. Haley extends the conventional view on two counts: firstly, her examples look out from the bench to a wider world and secondly, her examples are dematerialised concepts – trading and economics are largely abstract activities. A comparable attitude to shifting craft-thinking away from the material is evident as Haley sets out her meaning of “process” (excerpt 4.17). Process in craft is normatively thought of as procedurally working on materials. Here, Haley pleads for recognition of the “thinking process” in opposition to being seen by her material outcomes, as “ninety percent...is about the thinking process”. Haley is positioning herself across both of these stories via craft as a cerebral skill, rather than a manual skill. However, Haley still exhibits

affinities to objects and materiality. In her view, one of the things that sets makers apart from some other people is an ability to understand “messy stuff” – the detritus, by-products, and accidents of the process of making. By orienting her version of being a maker toward music, Haley spoke about hearing a talk by the composer, Steve Reich, again indexing material-less creative practices that evolve through process.

Across these narratives Haley appears to use her basis in craft to align to other practices, extending an idea of what craft knowledge can afford. She appears to locate her craft cerebrally, rather than entirely residing in practical labour.

### 8.3.2 Liz's *'Meccano childhood'*.

Like Haley, Liz appears rooted in a materials-based epistemology, although Liz recalls objects and artefacts more readily than raw materials. For Liz, her memories of putting in bulbs and wiring plugs are central to her being, and have been a resource by which to differentiate herself from students and “young people”. The objects she uses in her talk are modest, mundane even, not celebratory recollections of pivotal pieces of work. But even as modest objects they are positioned by Liz as pivotal to her sense of self. Liz works with the object in her stories through verbs, she is (was) doing things with them “wiring”, “fixing up”, thus lodging her concerns in the collectively worked-up concept of ‘process’. It is a link to process, indexed in her verbs, but stated more explicitly in her utterance “process is so, it's the star in the object” (excerpt 4.21). Whereas Haley appears to locate the doing in the thinking, Liz offers a more literal rendering of constructing, tinkering, and repairing. It is an image reinforced by her comments on the difficulties writing: “Bit right, bit wrong, screw loose, tighten it up with another word, what tool am I missing?”

Objects frame Liz's particular presentation of her education. Objects also frame how Liz positions herself spatially. Liz alludes to two moments of instability: once when journeying across London, and again when going in and out of John's workshop. In both cases she sets up the instability through objects – with small tools. As she faces the strangeness of John's workshop, it is the peculiarities of his tools and what they do that feels unfamiliar, and why she gravitated back to the more familiar surroundings of Haley's space. The unknown-ness of travelling across London is contrasted with the durable stability of her hammer and pliers in her own workshop.



### 8.3.3 *Dan's dissident perspective.*

Dan speaks less than the other participants at the events. And in some ways his silence shapes his position. Dan has sought to differentiate himself from socially accomplished consensus. He has countered the position in the group that talk has facilitated some of the project's development: "Sometimes there is too much conversation, doing is really important, in the workshop, lovely moments when it was quiet" (excerpt 5.5). Although Dan is playing down the value of talk, it should be noted that of the exhibiting makers, Dan teaches the most, he frequently remains away from his own studio-work for weeks at a time. His playing down of talk might therefore be contextualised by the possibility that his teaching is too full of talk, rather than his experiences of the project. But his general comment on talk is qualified when he indexes the group's time in Munich and says "I'm not sure if it did come out of conversation...I get quite tired of conversation" (excerpt 5.6). Of the four exhibiting makers, Dan took part in the fewest of the gallery talks. Perhaps this can be interpreted as an act of literal, embodied positioning, away from the others in the group?

### 8.3.4 *John.*

John makes fewer explicit references to knowing through materials and objects than either Haley or Liz, but he indexes his affinity through implying the agency of the "lead boot" and "pots" in his story of a significant thing "happening". His description of a 'thing' happening, as a process in action, ties in with his claim that the events were hoped to become part of the project (excerpt 4.5). In this way he is orienting to the group interest in process as way of defining their staging of craft. John appears to distance himself from craft, by getting away from it and also wanting to talk with people other than makers. But this parallels Liz's claim that process, the thing at the heart of what they do, connects them to other things.

#### 8.4 Concluding remarks.

This thesis shows that language is co-constitutive of these crafts practitioners' working lives. I argue it is as much a part of creative labour as giving form to craft artefacts. The language analysed is usually unaccounted for by a craft literature that has prioritised biographical and technical accounts as representative of practice. For me, as a practitioner-researcher, the findings validate the stance that motivated the research in the first place: that the lived experience of language-in-practice is distinct to the abstract language of the crafts discourse. That being said, the research also shows that some of the talk's topicality, covering identity construction, categorisation, and being bound to materials, are not so different to some of the concerns of the canonical literature. Firstly, these themes might not have been revealed if we were looking for the big story or the pivotal, career-changing moment in the data. But secondly, revealing that some of the talk deals with similar themes to the literature, albeit by implicit indexical practices, validates attending to it to qualify some aspects of the literature.

Drawing attention to a small data sample and by using relatively micro analysis methods presents a case for recalibrating expectations vis-à-vis the scale of observable action in creative arts practice. By this I mean, that in similar way to how ethnography, language analysis, and the telling case reveal everyday artistry in almost every moment of talk-in-interaction I suggest there is a case to look beyond the 'big reveal' of the final artefact normally associated with arts practice.

I had much earlier thought of the events as 'casual' and I persisted with this view as I wanted to embrace the improvisatory impression that the talk seemed to give off. It took quite a while to realise just how much work was going on in the talk, that amongst it all, pragmatic tasks were being accomplished through interaction. The events might have been low-key in some regards but in other respects they were high stakes environments where people were staging their professional identities. I later characterised the events as 'convivial'. This change in view was mostly caused by attending to the performance features of the data.

The research method and process creates a potential paradox. I have analysed moments of importance and relevance that reside in the smallness of talk; normally unnoticed episodes, the research relying on naturally-occurring interactions. But I have drawn attention to these situations and emphasised the relevance of the event. The paradox arises that a gallery conversation might now be construed as an event, with the expectation of rendering insight. So it is

important to remember that it is the research method, not the event per-se that is important. However, the data comes from an event, and the event plays a role (chapter 6); it is clear that it is the being together that enables languaging of work(ing). The core data, as well as both occasionings of Liz's plug stories, came in the second hour of the event, and perhaps it is no accident that talk did its best work when things had settled, not quite routinised, but maybe expectations had subsided by then?

Talk, as rendered by these or similar methods, shares similar qualities to craftwork. They are not easy to quantify and possibly sound a little stretched, but it is to do with detail and particularity; attending to what is necessary to attend to in that moment. The improvisatory and contingent voice that might appear on the surface to be solo is in fact jointly-constructed: dialogic.

The thesis shows a particular method substantiating my critical stance on craft and language. However, the case study is small, which isn't so much a methodological problem, rather a reason to carry out similar research on other case studies. To an extent, the size of the case study was dictated by my need to engage in entirely new literature and methods as the research developed. Subsequent research and new projects would now have this foundation as a taken-for-granted aspect available to draw on. My use of small stories was guided by what I saw in the data, but small stories' critical perspective fitted well with my want to interrogate canonical assumptions and added to the method's attractions. As much as narrative constituted a significant part of the data, the rest of the talk was made in other modes. Opening out the research methods to include other modes would be of value. Gallery conversations are only one of the ways language figures in crafts practitioners professional lives (2.7), how the self is staged in other situations is another avenue of future research.

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## Appendix A.

Transcript of the core data.

- 1) *Ben*: the other thing I was going to ask as well is
- 2) what's been the response of the other members
- 3) *Haley*: I don't really know yeah
- 4) erm on the night of the private view really good
- 5) especially I mean I think I would describe this as a maker's exhibition
- 6) y'know it it is that really
- 7) *Liz*: mmm
- 8) *Haley*: that really its an acknowledgement of what we all do somehow erm
- 9) *Jane*: 'cos its like a window in on something
- 10) instead of just the kind of the conclusion the
- 11) only an object erm outcome and more accessible
- 12) *Haley*: um yeah
- 13) *Jane*: so that erm
- 14) *Haley*: so I have a feeling that its probably been quite good
- 15) we did notice at the first talk that we did in here which was er
- 16) the second talk we did a couple of Saturdays ago that there were
- 17) people coming up they weren't members they were customers coming up
- 18) the ramp and turning round and I don't think its 'cos we were talking
- 19) I think they they they're not that interested it it's funny well
- 20) *Ben*: what in this?
- 21) *Haley*: in the exhibition
- 22) *John*: its just kind of people like different things isn't it we like certain things  
so
- 23) people carrying Selfridges bags come in and realise its not for them and its  
fine
- 24) *Jane*: even the talks you've done the fact there's a number of them
- 25) and that they're er kind of titled differently themed
- 26) and whatever you've again it's a kind of way
- 27) of er of making it more accessible there's bound to be something
- 28) for somebody um that touches them and the fact that if there's
- 29) y'know just one you could miss it but there's another opportunity and another
- 30) *Ben*: yeah yeah

- 31) *John*: that's a thing that reflects about making processes as well the exhibition is
- 32) a work in progress nothing in here is truly finished and I think that it's probably
- 33) true to say that we haven't done as much in here to alter or to change things
- 34) as we kind of intended to we've still got a couple of weeks left
- 35) so we'll get a few things changed
- 36) so the show is kind of a working process and we wanted the conversations to
- 37) be part of that working process so that we could have the response of people and to
- 38) kind of if you like carry on working with people who were coming to see it
- 39) *Liz*: yeah yes
- 40) as a kind of conversation thing
- 41) *Jane*: well that's why I think there's an openness that allows the conversation
- 42) to happen whereas instead of this giving somebody a conclusion or outcome
- 43) *John*: yeah
- 44) *Jane*: saying well that's it what is there to talk about
- 45) *John*: well that's why we wanted it to be a conversation rather than y'know
- 46) a kind of wuh wuh wuh
- 47) *Jane*: there's also a kind of openness and generosity and sharing you talked
- 48) about trust and it feels like that as well to even have this you don't if there's
- 49) gonna be three people turning up or thirty-three
- 50) *Haley*: mmm
- 51) *John*: and we don't mind if people don't like it I mean
- 52) *Liz*: yeah
- 53) *John*: y'know I think we've taken quite a risk putting something out
- 54) that is completely unedited we brought along the crap as well
- 55) we've not left anything out theirs is stuff here we know doesn't work
- 56) we know there's stuff here that's completely
- 57) I don't think there's anything that completely fails
- 58) but there's some stuff here that doesn't work as well as other bits and pieces
- 59) we brought that along because you have those bits in conversations where
- 60) you say the wrong thing or you get your words the wrong way around and then
- 61) you have a chance to kind of patch things up backtrack and go round
- 62) *Liz*: yeah
- 63) *John*: another way so we wanted to try and reflect in our conversations

- 64) and the talk that kind of erm sort of conversational kind of thing going on  
65) in the making process was about what we were talking about earlier  
66) couldn't quite pin it down to a linear  
67) chain of events that its much more pinned together pinned loosely  
68) *Jane*: but the way you talked about the thinking behind it  
69) y'know you've got that diagram on the other side a kind of sequential erm  
70) *John*: yeah  
71) *Jane*: consequences route through but it doesn't always work like that  
72) *John*: it didn't work like that at all we set that up as a kind of  
73) *Jane*: no  
74) *John*: opening gambit  
75) *Jane*: but that's you know it's always it seems we expect I've said to you  
76) searching for this ryyz.. arborific tree-like kind of logical way of thinking  
77) *John*: mmm  
78) *Jane*: whereas I think a lot of creative people think sort of more rhyzomically  
so  
79) it's from the centre kind of outwards  
80) and I know in writing that I've been doing recently kind of essays  
81) I've been writing them from the middle outwards struggling with erm how that  
82) contradicts the sort of seeming order of how you write an essay and I was  
83) thinking that in terms of practice because it helped me with my writing  
84) when I decided that um that I was making essays  
85) once I'd decided I was making essays it was far more  
86) *Liz*: yep  
87) *Jane*: understandable to me  
88) *Liz*: mmm  
89) *Jane*: as a process  
90) *Liz*: yeah yeah  
91) *Jane*: uhm because I was familiar with that bit very recently um so I'm just  
92) wondering in your talking when you said that really that system  
93) didn't quite work it sort of stopped here and went of at its own pace  
94) *John*: but but that system was very necessary at the beginning because we  
knew 95) we wanted to do it we had confidence in our own and each others'  
96) abilities to do it but we needed something  
97) as a kind of methodology or framework something concrete to actually start  
98) so we needed to set the rules to start if only to break and forget that is  
99) *Haley*: but I think it also became more important at the point

- 100) where we knew we were going to show it because  
101) we did have to have some way of people understanding  
102) something about it I think  
103) *Liz*: yeah yeah I think it was a sort of accepting responsibility in a way  
104) we knew we were going to put something out there  
105) and I think to give thought and consideration  
106) to how it might be viewed at least try and think about it  
107) *Haley*: it gave it a bit of that framework  
108) *Visitor*: when I came to the show a week ago that was the thing  
109) that keyed me in to what was going on y'know  
110) realising it was there were four sets of objects floating around  
111) *Haley*: yeah  
112) *Visitor*: and then I understood what was happening  
113) *Haley/John*: yeah  
114) *Visitor*: I think it's interesting as well there's a lot of talk there's been a show  
115) here as well where people showed their work their resolved pieces but their  
116) also asked to show their working and sketchbooks and y'know sometimes  
117) y'want to show that work and sometimes y'don't well that was just my  
118) thoughts going through my head and they're not resolved to actually put up  
119) the working method is really exciting and brave thing to do do  
120) *Haley*: yeah  
121) *Visitor*: and maybe people coming into the gallery aren't quite used  
122) *Haley*: no  
123) *Visitor*: to the being faced with that but not the resolved pieces  
124) *Haley*: but I think it's a really important point because actually by doing it  
125) together we can take that risk whereas I think we discussed this that  
126) *Liz*: yeah  
127) *Haley*: we wouldn't necessarily have done that alone it seems like  
128) a thing to do we need to do together it that sense  
129) *Liz*: it does and I think I said it on the Wednesday talk that I  
130) I wouldn't trust myself to do it if I did it solo 'cos I think another jeweller  
131) asked the question erm don't you do that anyway this process  
132) push your own work and ideas as a maker you know almost  
133) aren't you supposed to do that as your job and my response  
134) was well yeah I don't think I'd trust myself to do it as perhaps  
135) honestly or accurately because if ones needs (the reading ??)  
136) and having a conversation with y'self I can choose to listen to



137) whatever I want or edit and and y'know make er er lead you all on  
 138) or lead myself on so I still have that control but I think if I and  
 139) I because I've done it with others three other makers everything's  
 140) there I haven't had to edit I've had to respond to things  
 141) I could've ignored if I was by myself  
 142) and and in a way when you do it solo you do imagine what might be  
 143) for that exhibition let's say you do your work and you choose your work  
 144) then there's there's y'know I would have felt that I have to fill something  
 145) a gallery with new work potentially some for sale or what am I saying  
 146) but to do it this way is genuinely unknown  
 147) *John*: well we've had very fast reflection  
 148) *Liz*: Yeah  
 149) *John*: essentially it comes back to Russell's talk the other week doesn't it's  
 150) been a setup that's lent itself and given us the benefit of very fast feedback  
 151) over the kind of words and objects and results hasn't it we've had very  
 152) quick feedback on all our actions because we've kind of put ourselves  
 153) physically in a space and given each other time constraints as well  
 154) that we've had to respond to each other's stuff through actions on them so  
 155) perhaps there's even that thing where we haven't sat down and critiqued  
 156) any of the work we haven't sat down and discussed what's gone on but  
 157) perhaps more tellingly the stuff we've that picked up and run with the things  
 158) and the processes that have been more successful are the ones people  
 159) have responded to so the words haven't been that necessary we've  
 160) critiqued through actions of making haven't we  
 161) *Haley*: hmm  
 162) *John*: and found great sort of confidence in  
 163) that but that has had to come out of trusting each other hasn't it  
 164) I just wanted to put up there how kind of compressed it got in time-wise just  
 165) as a sort of incidental thing the first set of objects we did was going round  
 166) the corner back in week five then the second set was week twenty-four so  
 167) we did the second lot very quickly over the last few weeks which was a paint  
 168) tube a five pound note  
 169) *Haley*: erm erm  
 170) *John*: a list of words and thoughts  
 171) *Haley*: some wood  
 172) *John*: oh yeah some wood so we had a kind of second round and that 'cos  
 173) that was much what this came down to most of this making happened

174) in an ever compressing sort of scenario and this meeting here with Susan said

175) yeah we'll bring an exhibition it'll be brilliant we'll bring you an exhibition by

176) then we'd done practically nothing had we I think had our first swap and done some

177) kind of setting light to things and a little bit of work but then it all happened in

178) much more sort of compressed timescale we had this first day of working

179) together and then the second third fourth fifth so everything came out of five

180) days of working together really we got everything compressed and then

181) on the day before delivery we got together to make trestles and blackboard and

182) things and we set up the next day and then all of a sudden its now so we've

183) had this d'd'd'd' like a train like getting squished up against the buffers so at

184) some point here this is going to have to have to un-concertina I suppose

185) isn't it and have some time to kind of stretch sideways and take on board

186) some other things and start moving in that direction

187) *Haley*: but it strikes me going back to the music analogy that um perhaps

188) this is we don't know yet and its interesting to talk about it but perhaps that's

189) the way that it will work like were almost come together in a practice and

190) performance sense and to do stuff um 'cos that feels like that was part of

191) that that we almost working up to a performance

192) *Liz*: yeah

193) *Haley*: of some kind that we were y'know

194) *Visitor*: jamming

195) *Many*: agreement and yeah etc

196) *Haley*: yeah Jamming and that perhaps that's the thing how will it come

197) into the work it might I'm absolutely sure that it already is that it will come

198) into the work right now it and but that we'll also be quite keen to be doing something

199) quite soon to feel like doing another jam jamming session quite soon in fact the

200) strange thing about the workshop for me is that because you came into it at

201) that point change for me that erm actually now without you it's ... empty

202) *Many*: aaahhhh and laughing

203) *Ben*: but John is still on his own

204) *Haley*: especially without all the work 'cos I had all the work in my studio so I  
 205) have this this nice thing what and it'll be back I'm sure into the studio but um  
 206) yeah it's a strange thi you set up this thing and becomes a space where  
 207) you did something and so to retain some of that so if we take it somewhere  
 208) else and work somewhere else how does that change what will happen and  
 209) that element of the trust and the risk will grow and change I suppose  
 210) *Ben*: mm mm  
 211) *Jane*: what about the trust on the part of the gallery to take the exhibition  
 212) without knowing what it was or or when did you define it in some way  
 213) *Haley*: hmm hmm I know  
 214) *John*: I think it's about time they did do something like that  
 215) *Jane*: absolutely  
 216) *John*: 'cos it's got really boring here yeah sometimes and I think they  
 217) should have a responsibility to do something a bit more ...  
 218) *Jane*: or trust makers to do  
 219) *John*: trust maker to do something 'cos we  
 220) *Haley*: but we but  
 221) *John*: we're not gonna y'know bugger it all up  
 222) *Haley*: but the direct answer was that we were trusted we didn't we were  
 223) we were trusted definitely um and that was great um I think that for me says  
 224) more about the time element that we can be trusted because we y'know you  
 225) build trust from doing other stuff so we're all members here over a various  
 226) periods of time and have done a lot of work in different scenarios so I think  
 227) in that sense we should be trusted but also um I think people saw us as an  
 228) intriguing combination which I think were quite intrigued by ourselves 'cos I  
 229) don't think we see that so much do we I was quite surprised when Susan  
 230) said that, Susan the director of the gallery said she found us an unusual  
 231) combination which I don't think any of us no we didn't feel that we were an  
 232) unusual  
 233) *John*: but that's because we know that because of the conversation  
 234) *Haley*: so that just proves that there's always a different thing going on  
 235) the perception of your work and the individual pieces maybe  
 236) doesn't show the underlying things that are going on it can't do  
 237) *Ben*: Well I think that's what's wrong with the sector  
 238) there's not enough dialogue like this goes on amongst makers themselves.  
 239) Just sit around and sit like this and talk and talk there needs to be more of it.  
 240) *John*: but also not just with makers though,

241) *Ben*: well whoever yeah

242) *John*: cos that's sort of fencing y'self in

243) while we're talking about this and all our other interests I'm sure everyone

244) round here has lots more interests in sort of dance and choreography and in

245) music and and cooking and gardening all sorts of ways of dealing with

246) the kind of fluidities and the kind of way that time happens through material

247) how we kind of push stuff about to kind of make our world.

248) *Haley*: and I think actually we haven't spoken about this as a group but we're

249) obviously all thinking different things about this but I've certainly been

250) thinking that that's next stage of it really is to get it out in in probably into

251) different places that are intrigued or involved in process.

252) *John*: get away from crafts.

253) *Haley*: no its not to get away from it but its to share something else about it

254) you know the musical thing

255) all of that the material thing

256) all of those things that are just so strong.

257) *Rachel*: the materials library might be formally

258) *Ben*: yeah that bit of space

259) *Rachel*: expanding I mean we talked about you wanting to go into Somerset

260) House and its really we've got a grant now

261) we gonna the materials library will be based at that next level

262) and for us one of the thoughts is to be the materials library

263) in the institute of making

264) but for us making is from the molecule to the building and everything

265) in between and you'll come and it'll be the material scientist the

266) furniture maker all the people who make things it could be a piece of music

267) I mean we had Brian Eno in the library looking at material stuff

268) but this is y'know processes

269) *Liz*: to add to that its why then process is so

270) it's the star in the object isn't it it's the key that links everything

271) and then doesn't then separate makers from other disciplines or from life

272) itself because we all know its not like that and I think I suppose I'm speaking

273) from experience when you do separate yourself to get yourself somewhere

274) y'know you can hone it down and you can concentrate in a way in a sense

275) you do need to do that but then at some point you do feel well there's

276) I'm interested in much more in life and a lot of it is influenced by what I do in

277) terms of the making you feel you do want to share that and converse in that

278) and open that out and I think in that you do need to do that and  
 279) open that out and I think then it's a true sort of connecting point  
 280) that's how I see it it then gives you a chance to connect to  
 281) other disciplines makers professions other things going on well  
 282) *Haley*: hmm it was interesting when we saw Steve Reich talk before  
 283) at the royal festival hall before Christmas and he talked of his wife  
 284) and 'cos she was is a textile artist  
 285) so and so again this musician was very involved in process and time  
 286) and um all the things that I feel that I'm interested in he could then talk  
 287) about making from her perspective as well of making textile weaving  
 288) so you know it is a thinking process rather than I think that's what it is for me  
 289) it's about a thinking process not an outcome.  
 290) *Liz*: yeah yeah  
 291) *Haley*: but all of our work is seen in outcomes  
 292) so you ninety percent of what I do during the year is about the thinking  
 293) process and the process probably more than that actually and  
 294) five percent is about the individual object being out there  
 295) um and I don't y'know even going down to how you make a living or what  
 296) you do I make my living from the process not from the outcome  
 297) so that's interesting as well  
 298) I think that's possibly a big move in in the area as well from when certainly I  
 299) was first showing yeah first showing my work when it was all about outcome  
 300) which was in the early mid nineties to now when I don't think it is  
 301) but its just mmmm its just kind of the I think its acknowledging that change  
 302) in different places and acknowledging of the um  
 303) whilst we do still have to make objects and we sell them and we have an  
 304) audience for that then there is an audience for something else as well  
 305) I don't if its I don't know if it might be more sustaining I don't know  
 306) *Ben*: Mr Smith (Dan), he'll be back in a bit,  
 307) you know he became an accomplished silversmith and then he decided to  
 308) cut it off almost to produce the work he produces now  
 309) just feels like with him there's a  
 310) *Haley*: again I suppose we all have different views of it  
 311) and I haven't spoken to him about it  
 312) but I look at his work that he was making when he first finished college  
 313) and I see the correlation now like I do with my own work  
 314) you know and lots of I think it was always very playful so

315) there's the playful nature and it was always about that material  
316) so his sensibility with working with a material is still there  
317) *Jane*: he used the he used the Jerwood it seemed to me to put something  
318) new out there and that was a kind of work in progress  
319) *John*: salt stuff wasn't it  
320) *Haley*: salt  
321) *Ben*: yeah  
322) *Jane*: which makes me think of looking at this in a way  
323) *Haley*: well he  
324) *Jane*: people thought he was quite brave at that stage to  
325) *Haley*: but interestingly perhaps this allows you to go back to some of  
326) your first steps as well 'cos there's some work in here that he's told us about  
327) that he's gone back to college to when he was at not even at the royal  
328) college he's gone back to Camberwell when he was at Camberwell  
329) doing his degree and brought back in some of the things he was doing then  
330) so I guess it's just all there in the mix isn't it?  
331) *Ben*: mmm  
332) *Haley*: comes it comes and goes  
333) *Ben*: and this is the vehicle to get it out  
334) *Haley*: in and out appears and disappears through space and time  
335) *Ben*: mmm yeah pulling on another part of y'language your repertoire to use  
336) a music reference again experience and handling and touch  
337) *Haley*: I think for me the most different work in a sense is John's because  
338) well just thinking about your functional work and y'know how it has to  
339) function it's functional studio work sort of turning that on its head somehow  
340) *John*: but this is part of that other stuff that I've been doing which is  
341) not about function in a sense so I suppose again sort coming back to Haley's  
342) question about what feeds back in to the what might be thought of as my  
343) regular practice cos I don't really see that there's such a gap between things  
344) this is this is kind of processes and the way of thinking aren't perhaps that  
345) different I think what the difference is is this is hugely accelerated this has  
346) happened in a timeframe this kind of bit here and it's happened with in that  
347) acceleration there's been a kind of I suppose a sort of comradeship developed  
348) that normally would be kind of solo working y'know going out taking  
349) photographs and looking at things and thinking yeah  
350) *Visitor*: that it sounds like being playful again just invigorating  
351) *John*: yeah

352) *Haley*: yeah

353) *John*: yeah, the actual processes are really quite similar but the process  
 354) of going through that process are quite different and I don't really see myself  
 355) I don't really see much difference in the working processes between  
 356) the kind of things I've been addressing over the last couple of years  
 357) in kind of contrast to the functional furniture other than the fact that the  
 358) functional furniture functions apart from that it looks a very similar thing to  
 359) do with structure and mass and line and material and surfaces but in a kind  
 360) of more formalised way I guess it has to

361) *Ben*: appeals to somebody else

362) *John*: yeah yeah well it's got to do its function job and also it's a commission  
 363) work for someone else someone paying me money to take up a reasonable  
 364) amount of space in their piece of expensive real estate y'know a dining table  
 365) costs a lot of money to house and presupposes that you've got the space to  
 366) put it so you have to go on what they want as well but so it is coming back  
 367) so that collaboration thing it's a kind of play on collaboration

368) between myself as the maker and the

369) *Visitor*: it's quite a complicated process though

370) *John*: yeah

371) *Visitor*: trusting the person commissioning you

372) *John*: it can be it can be yeah

373) *Visitor*: interesting

374) *John*: sometimes it can be really simple though you can have a really good  
 375) conversation with them they can see something in your work that they  
 376) relate to and let you kind of question what they kind of thought they needed  
 377) perhaps and to a slightly different it can work really nicely so I don't think  
 378) there is such a split really between this and the real stuff this is kind of I sort  
 379) of mean that in inverted commas this is kind of it's a kind of accelerated

380) *Haley*: well interestingly

381) *John*: sketchbook of stuff

382) *Haley*: in the work we all do in the time phase

383) that we were doing this I know that there were days when I was working on  
 384) this but then on other pieces of work during the day so I was going back

385) *Visitor*: it affects your state of mind what you're learning in both projects

386) *Haley*: and so through working on other work and things that are going on

387) it all feeds in and you go back and forwards

388) so must have been doing the same working on other things

389) *John*: well the interesting

390) *Haley*: piece of work

391) *John*: yeah I was working on furniture that was commissioned by someone

392) for y'know a sum of money to do a job in a separate place that

393) ill never see again probably what was also kind of interesting is that

394) at the same time as this was starting up this project which we've mostly

395) spoken about in terms of kind of speed and trust and kind of vigour and

396) playfulness and getting something done quickly and rigorously kind of erm

397) y'know vigour is is I was making work or coming to the end of making work

398) for a show that Haley curated that was last year that I was involved in Tim

399) was involved in as well erm (name of exhibition) which was supposed to

400) be about speed being something we think about in a contemplative way but

401) I made work just as quickly for that really. So that exhibition was about kind

402) of the relationship to the slow movement and that was probably one of the

403) misconceptions from people that don't make wasn't it of that show that there

404) was a view of that show being about time slowing down literally and being

405) this luxurious space and being able to take time and stitch every stitch for

406) 3 minutes a stitch spend your entire life making one piece of embroidery or

407) something whereas for almost everybody in that show it wasn't was it it was

408) about it was about this period here which was that kind of sort of gestation

409) period I suppose putting y'self in a position t'think thru things

410) and consider all the options and put things together in a sort of thoughtful

411) manner and then all of a sudden use skilled processes in which we become

412) able to trust and feel confident in to make something to get somewhere else

413) so you kind of make the thing as a vehicle to think things through the object

414) is rarely the be all and end all of it. I suppose most of the stuff in that show

415) was about well I suppose what were asking visitors to do for this show is

416) asking visitors to play their part in the process of the object in of the social

417) life of stuff that asking people to think asking those ambiguous things about

418) furniture and I know Mark was thinking around notions of scores and music

419) and things and Simon was thinking about the value of language and

lexicons and things so

420) *Haley*: I'm quite interested in that notion of who comes in and looks around

421) this and what it means to different people in the same sense of as that

422) exhibition which is the more individual object on a m well actually there are



423) different types of objects there are there is an installation that's growing over  
 424) time there is work that's a body of work but then there are individual objects  
 425) with no notion of where they've come from bar a sentence and then more  
 426) information in the catalogue so it's that more traditional exhibition of that it  
 427) seems to me that still your more traditional visitor can understand that much  
 428) better than this and I do think that that's part of the thing that's interesting is  
 429) what that means about what we all do and how that's perceived and  
 430) that's the journey that I think we all have to kind of go on to try and make  
 430) that change somehow because that's just one aspect of something and  
 431) to reveal something that's more hidden and interestingly there are lots of  
 432) exhibitions on at the moment that are about process 'cos it's a sort of thing  
 433) that's out there in the mix of stuff we've just been to see the Eva Hesse  
 434) exhibition at the Camden arts centre and that's some of her  
 435) studio works and uh if anyone wants to go it ends tomorrow so you've got  
 436) one more day to go but it's a very good exhibition of her studio work  
 437) but the way that it's exhibited privileges the object in a certain way again.  
 438) Dan: I still go back to that that time that we had last year  
 439) in February in Munich and that erm and I'm not sure  
 440) if it did come out of conversation because I think it came out of  
 441) doing and I get quite tired of conversation  
 442) cos I really like doing so it's just like  
 443) Haley: and I guess it's incredibly precious work because it's some of the  
 444) only work that will exist of that nature  
 445) hmm an y'know you can see the hands of her in it  
 446) you can see that wonderful wonderful thing that is just her thing in there  
 447) but they're her studio works 'n they've been taken out of the studio so it's it's  
 448) its a funny thing and I guess at the time when she was working  
 449) before umm before she died that that sort of work would never have been  
 450) shown just  
 451) never ever made it out of the studio door because it would have  
 452) been seen to have the anti-effect on her other work would have devalued  
 453) the large work somehow and so its interesting now that its ok to bring  
 454) it out even though that's the context today it wasn't the context of her  
 455) working day too so i find that very interesting that we can live within the  
 456) context were in suddenly accept accept stuff  
 457) but I think as a maker it's still difficult for people to accept some of this  
 458) messy stuff or that they think something's been badly made somehow

459) *Ben*: mmm

460) *Jane*: they don't understand they're not used to understanding or to know

461) or think there's something to know

462) *Haley*: or they don't want to know I remember when we were in Munich last

463) year er I wont say who it is but a gallery owner came in to the space

464) *John*: oh go on say who it is

465) *Haley*: gallery owner came into the space and um

466) was very very kind of derogatory about it not being in a white cube

467) *Rachel*: I wondered if for the visitor it wasn't to this space I was very lucky to

468) have a day I think it must have been close to the end

469) *Haley*: yeah close to the end

470) *Rachel*: and I was in the corner of John's bit beavering away doing my own

471) thing but every now 'n' then I'd turn around and John holding a stick

472) with a bucket on the end and just this beautiful choreography of you and a

473) bucket lovely

474) *John*: Rachel wanted to make some handles as part of her materials project

475) so came along to the workshop to use the lathe was very patient sat on a 99

476) bus to the studio for the best part of the morning all the way to xxx and

477) erm it was the day that erm I decided to something with Dan's project with

478) Dan's second starting point which was he came along and thought oh no I

479) haven't brought anything so he just gave us all a fiver as a starting point as

480) his second phase thing and gave us a five pound note so yeah I just

481) decided to do something

482) *Haley*: in homage in homage

483) *John*: based on his it's an homage innit

484) *Haley*: in homage

485) *John*: it's an homage

486) *Rachel*: you made a small noise to the bucket

487) *John*: last summer I don't know if you saw it at the Roundabout Studio down

488) at xxx Dan made a set of galvanised buckets that'd all been adjusted

489) and slanted so just sat in the space kind of as dancers might adopt postures

490) and whatever so he made stuff out of tin buckets

491) so I got a tin bucket and put it on legs bit like me other things on legs

492) *Rachel*: but the photos give you a window to that

493) because people could look at it and go look that is they're havin' a meal

494) but in the corner it's that bit d'you know what I mean and so that tells you a

495) little bit about that story

496) *Haley*: its very its really interesting actually because well through photos as  
 497) well as 'cos obviously we were all taking photos while we were doing it and  
 498) there were cameras around we were just picking up cameras taking photos  
 499) when we looked back we realised that there were some bits that we hadn't  
 500) realised which is the interesting bit about process as well there are a couple  
 501) of Munich photos in there and there's the classic one that one at the top  
 502) *John*: 'cos for me one of the most significant things that happened earlier in  
 this  
 503) project when we were in Munich we just stuck one of Dan's pots on one of  
 504) my pieces as a kind of lead boot so it's a thing where we were just kind of  
 505) putting work on work and in work there's a photo somewhere of the one of  
 506) his sort of um like a er whisky drinking cup thing sort of so this is sig...  
 507) so although its quite small its quite a significant moment this idea of  
 508) balancing work balancing work on other stuff erm but then  
 509) *Haley*: leads to something else  
 510) *John*: but then when Liz came with her first starting point which was her  
 511) copper sugar bag the first thing I wanted to do was fill it with lead which is  
 512) one of Dan's materials and I didn't the thing I did was my second choice  
 513) thing was to completely encase it in plaster in that piece there so that was  
 514) one of the first things I did in this project completely encase it in plaster and  
 515) I never got the reference other than id been using the photos anyway in  
 516) some visual research stuff and sketchbook stuff and drawings and using  
 517) these photos but Haley pointed it out that when  
 518) *Haley*: it's at the top  
 519) *Liz*: top left top left  
 520) *John*: 'cos when we were in the foundry last year there were lots of cast  
 blocks  
 521) that they were casting work in and one of the pieces that Liz had used as an  
 522) impromptu plinth if you like with all her sugar bags on one of the big blocks  
 523) of plaster and Dan had shown his work on big plaster blocks  
 524) *Haley*: big plaster blocks  
 525) *John*: Plaster blocks I can't see anything going blind here we are he'd been  
 526) using the plaster blocks in the other room and so there's  
 527) *Haley*: but then I've just realised  
 528) *John*: I don't think I've told it very well  
 529) *Haley*: I've just realised as well when you look over there there near the  
 bottom

530) on the left is a wall of post it notes and around that time I was in America  
531) and I bought some fluorescent tape and its become very well used this  
fluorescent  
532) tape 'cos I seem to stick I everywhere erm and just looking there I think  
there  
533) are some little things like that that have come through that 'cos you can see  
534) those little things those little pointers that come out somehow.  
535) *Liz*: yeah  
536) *Haley*: 'cos there was no fluorescent tape then in that work  
537) *Liz*: and it's the same for the bag on the plaster block and it's ended up in a  
538) block I think in a way we sort of suddenly realise all these things when we  
539) put the pictures up I suppose we could see it as a big map that way what  
540) happened all that time ago  
541) *Haley*: that was quite an incredible process getting those photos out  
542) *Liz*: yeah  
543) *Haley*: it really was so I think they've been really important to us as well  
544) 'cos obviously we can look at them on our own computers or we've got a  
blog  
545) we can put them on there but actually seeing all of that as it sort of came  
546) together  
547) *Liz*: yeah  
548) *Haley*: was quite intriguing 'cos I can still see things that are happening  
549) *Rachel*: we take so many photos its so easy to snap snap snap  
550) but we don't print them out so much and don't worry about running out of  
551) film so to print them out put them up and see them in lines  
552) *Liz*: and you would have selected  
553) you would have selected as well from your print outs  
554) *John*: but it's also the bit between the solo and the social isn't it all those  
photos  
555) have been on my laptop for a year but it's just kind of me looking at them  
but it  
556) was very different thing of being a social kind of joint curation thing I think  
we  
557) had about three hundred printed off and we put about a hundred up but we  
558) spread them all out on the floor but it was very different for it to be sort of  
559) lots of people seeing the photographs and being able to it was that very  
560) different thing of again

561) *Liz*: yeah

562) *John*: that contrast between working on your own and working in a small group

563) *Visitor*: there is one picture that I really like you

564) I could tell how cold it was like you're all wearing a uniform

565) *John*: all got furniture blankets on

566) *Ben*: should have brought them here now were freezing

567) *Haley*: well on that note I don't know if anyone wants another cup of tea or

568) *John*: I'll go and put the kettle on

569) *Haley*: or whether we should just has anybody got any more questions

570) feel free to have

571) *Ben*: or answer

572) *Haley*: or answers

573) *John*: yeah have you got any answers

571) *Visitor*: can I just ask having these working sessions together further down the

572) line will there be another series of talks like this and an exhibition like this d'you

573) think so we can see how things

574) *John*: we'd hope so yeah

575) *Liz*: yeah

576) *Haley*: I mean it's just struck me that we should probably even do something in

577) the studio cos it seems to me that was one of the things in the foundry as well

578) that the space became part of the thing so you know that's quite interesting cos

579) what you see in the photographs are those like like you said you know you

580) see why something might have happened.

Data transcript B.

- 1) Liz: Dan and myself, we left our own workshops
- 2) and we journeyed to Haley and Johns workspace
- 3) and they both share a studio though they are quite separate and they
- 4) erm both very kindly and I er a silly thing but they invited us both in
- 5) to then carry out these sessions within their workspace we just decided
- 6) between us that that would be a good place for these activities to be carried on
- 7) and there was a sense of leaving something behind,
- 8) I don't know if Dan felt this, I think he did,
- 9) and going off into something new and unexpected
- 10) Liz: In your own space there's a sense of comfort there
- 11) there's everything the same
- 12) I don't know if your workspace is the same
- 13) but I can leave mine for one day or a year and nothing will change
- 14) that hammer is still there
- 15) those pliers are still there
- 16) and I can trust that and that has a place in a maker's journey
- 17) Dan: mmm
- 18) Liz: I noticed that there was this funny thing where it took a while
- 19) to get into John's room did you notice that? Because in a way
- 20) that I think noticing that language of tools and making-language if you
- 21) go into somebody else's space, well like John's, you go in
- 22) and you don't really engage because you don't really know what things do.
- 23) You can appreciate them for what they are
- 24) and you might have seen someone use that tool or go through that process.
- 25) But generally you are observing, spectating, and you come back again.
- 26) So in a way that's why we gravitated to our space
- 27) Haley: But that began to change.
- 28) Liz: it did change yeah
- 29) Haley: It changed and I see that as the next part of this as well.

## Appendix B. Ethical approval.

David Gates,  
Department of Humanities,  
23<sup>rd</sup> May 2011,



Dear David,

### **REP-H/10/11-15 'Voices from the workshop. Theories and practices of communication amongst contemporary crafts practitioners.'**

I am pleased to inform you that the above application has been reviewed by the A&H Research Ethics Panel that FULL APPROVAL is now granted.

Please ensure that you follow all relevant guidance as laid out in the King's College London *Guidelines on Good Practice in Academic Research* ([http://www.kcl.ac.uk/college/policyzone/attachments/good\\_practice\\_May\\_08\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/college/policyzone/attachments/good_practice_May_08_FINAL.pdf)).

For your information ethical approval is granted until 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014. If you need approval beyond this point you will need to apply for an extension to approval at least two weeks prior to this explaining why the extension is needed, (please note however that a full re-application will not be necessary unless the protocol has changed). You should also note that if your approval is for one year, you will not be sent a reminder when it is due to lapse.

If you do not start the project within three months of this letter please contact the Research Ethics Office. Should you need to modify the project or request an extension to approval you will need approval for this and should follow the guidance relating to modifying approved applications: <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/ethics/applicants/modifications.html>

Any unforeseen ethical problems arising during the course of the project should be reported to the approving committee/panel. In the event of an untoward event or an adverse reaction a full report must be made to the Chairman of the approving committee/review panel within one week of the incident.

Please would you also note that we may, for the purposes of audit, contact you from time to time to ascertain the status of your research.

If you have any query about any aspect of this ethical approval, please contact your panel/committee administrator in the first instance (<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/ethics/contacts.html>). We wish you every success with this work.

Yours sincerely

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Daniel Butcher  
Research Ethics Administrator

## Appendix C. Parallel professional practice.

In this appendix I list the work I have done alongside the thesis.

In chapter one I sketched how this research was motivated from a professionally situated perspective. In chapter eight I noted how the research process has overlapped and informed my studio furniture work. I also list here the papers and book chapters I have written and delivered during the research.

### Book chapters.

(2016) *From 'In Our Houses' to 'The Tool at Hand': Breaching Normal Procedural Conditions in Studio Furniture Making*. In Marchand, T.H.J. (Ed) *Craft as Problem Solving. Ethnographic Studies of Design and Making*. Farnham: Ashgate.

(2013) *History in the Making; the use of talk in inter-disciplinary contemporary craft collaborative practice*. In *Oral History in the Visual Arts*, (2013), Sandino, L. and Partington, M. (eds) London: Bloomsbury.

(2013) *The Trouble with Verbs*. Catalogue essay in *The Tool at Hand*. Milwaukee, WI, Chipstone Foundation. <http://toolathand.org/#essays/david-gates>

### Refereed conference and symposium papers.

*Stories From The Workshop: Communicative Practices Amongst Craft Practitioners*. Making Futures Conference, Plymouth College of Art September 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> 2013. Published in online journal of proceedings: [plymouthart.ac.uk/research/journalvol3/david-gates-stories-from-the-workshop-communicative-practices-amongst-craft](http://plymouthart.ac.uk/research/journalvol3/david-gates-stories-from-the-workshop-communicative-practices-amongst-craft)

*History in the Making; the use of talk in inter-disciplinary contemporary craft collaborative practice*. Oral History Society conference, Victoria & Albert Museum, 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> July 2010.



*Sweepings; talk in inter-disciplinary collaborative craft practice.* Pairings Conference, Manchester Metropolitan University. May 2011.

*Meaning Making in the Moment: Small Stories-in-interaction Enabling Critical Reflection.* To Think is to Experiment symposium, Centre for Narrative Research, University of East London. April 29th 2015.

*Locally-made identities: Interactional positioning in the small stories and counter narratives of a group of crafts practitioners.* One-Day Symposium: 'Discourse: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Identity' University of Sussex. November 18th 2016

### **Scholarly reviews.**

Jennifer Geigel Mikulay '*The Journal of Modern Craft*', vol 5 issue 3 Oct 2012 pp351-354 . Exhibition review; *The Tool at Hand*, Milwaukee Art Museum..

Heidi Yeo. '*The Journal of Craft Research*', vol 2, April 2011, pp161-. *Exhibition review; 60/40 Starting Points Series 2010*, Siobhan Davies Studios,

Martina Margetts. '*The Journal of Modern Craft*', vol 3 no.3 Nov. 2010 pp373-5. Exhibition review, *Taking Time; Craft and the Slow Revolution*.

Helen Carnac. '*Studio; Craft and Design in Canada*', Fall/Winter 2010, pp38-42, '*Making Time*',

### **Awards.**

2010. Winner. Jerwood Contemporary Makers.

2011. Winner. Wesley Barrell award for established makers.

2015. Gold Award. Cheongju biennale. South Korea.



Interlocutors: collecting cabinets for small objects. 2014.



Anon(.)Pts 1-6. Rhetorical objects. Functionless furniture to start a conversation.  
2009.



Goffman (1974). Characterless furniture to frame objects and spaces, bringing up questions of text and context. 2014.



From Greenwich to The Barrier. A collecting cabinet. 2015.



Perpetually Ajar. A collecting cabinet. 2015.